■ LIFESTYLE/C1
The perfect green salad

■ BUSINESS/B1
Finance dep't rejects tax relief for workers

■ METRO/A17
LTFRB: No fare hike unless diesel prices hit P35/liter

■ NEWS/A2
Yap back in GMA Cabinet as PMS head

Horse racing czar gets ax over misuse of gov't funds

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG HAS FIRED Philippine Racing Commission Chair Jaime R. Dinlayan in connection with the alleged misuse/plan of millions of pesos in Philippine funds.

Executive Secretary

DILAG

HOME/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, May 4, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 145 P18

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada assists his mother, Mary Ejercito, on her wheelchair shortly upon arrival on Wednesday at his home in Greenhills, San Juan.

Shades of Marcos, SC says of GMA's 1017

PRESIDENT Arroyo reads her papers before the start of a roundtable meeting in Malacañang on Wednesday

Dispersal of rallies, arrests, raid illegal

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

IT EVOKED SHADES OF FERDINAND MARCOS' martial law edict.

The Supreme Court yesterday declared unconstitutional the arrests of protesters, the forcible breakup of rallies, and the raid on a newspaper office that were carried out by security forces in accordance with President Macapagal-Arroyo's proclamation declaring a state of emergency in February.

For full text of 1971 decision, log on to: http://www.inq7.net/wmd/decision/1971_0102250.pdf

Voting 13-2, the court upheld the power of Ms Arroyo to declare a state of emergency and call on the Armed Forces to suppress lawless violence under Presidential Proclamation No. 1017. At the same time, however, the tribunal ruled as illegal a clause in PP 1017 giving herself authority to issue decrees.

The latest ruling was the third

SHADES/ A2

Velarde hits Cha-cha, supports Con-ass

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

CONSIDER CHARTER CHANGE through a constituent assembly—not through a signature campaign that is illegal and is nothing more than an attempt to grab power by those who stand to gain by it.

El Shaddai leader Rev. Mariano "Mike" Velarde yesterday said President Macapagal-Arroyo and leaders of the Senate and the House could avoid a confrontation over the government-led people's initiative by agreeing to this formula.

Arroyo supporters are gathering signatures under the people's initiative to a single question to be answered by yes or no: Whether Filipinos agree to a shift from the bicameral presidential system to a unicameral parliament and whether they

VELARDE/ A11

Erap comes home for mom's 101st birthday

By Nelson F. Flores

AFTER FIVE YEARS in detention, former President Joseph Estrada set foot for the first time on his home in San Juan to wish his 101-year-old mother happy birthday.

Inside the walled compound at No. 1 Polk St., North Greenhills, the scared leader stood teary-eyed beside a glass door fronting a manicured but empty lawn, where friends and admirers used to pay him court.

Media people were not allowed in the house.

Estrada, wearing his favorite gray jacket, arrived under police escort. He went straight to the house and stood beside the glass door next to the lawn.

"He paused for about a minute, sighed and, with teary eyes, said that it had been five

ERAP/ A11

Palace tells Senate: Mind your manners

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY TOLD the Senate to mind its manners, saying there was no cause for the chamber to blow its top over the no-show of two Cabinet officials and a barrage heard at a hearing on Tuesday.

"We ask the Senate to observe inter-branch courtesy and refrain from harsh tongues that tend to place the executive [branch] in a bad light," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Bunye said that the Palace had not been properly advised of the hearing of the Senate ways and means committee chaired by Sen. Ralph Recto, and that the agencies involved were "properly represented by highly capable officials."

Bunye denied that Presidential Macapagal-Arroyo had given Finance Secretary Margarita Teves, Trade Secretary Peter Favila and Internal Revenue Commissioner Jose Maria Buting a gag order.

"Cabinet officials can deal with matters at their level without involving the Chief Executive," he said.

Recto had earlier said that the

PALACE/ A4

RP media pay 'high price for outspokenness'

By Alexis Papa

THERE CAN BE NO PRESS FREEDOM WHEN journalists live in conditions of corruption, poverty and fear, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines said yesterday on World Press Freedom Day.

Jose Torres, NUJP spokesperson, said that "the ownership patterns of media ... breed the silent subject and inhuman conditions our colleagues, especially in the provinces, have to toil under, conditions that make them prone to corruption and unethical conduct."

"These ownership patterns, in turn, lead to the creation of public trust in media as harbingers of truth and the people's last resort against abuse. There can, indeed, be no press freedom when journalists continue to live in conditions of cor-

RP MEDIA/ A2

DON'T kill journalists is the message from members of the Philippine media on World Press Freedom Day.

Fil-Canadians raise race issue in boy's ordeal

By Vuk Cosovic

A TEACHER IN MONTREAL, CANADA, HAS reportedly "disciplined" a Filipino immigrant's son for eating with a spoon and fork—and reaped a wonderful from the local Filipino community, the Philippine Embassy and a Canadian organization against racial prejudice.

According to reports of the Montreal newspaper The Chronicle, disclosed yesterday by the Department of Foreign Affairs, the teacher, who watched over the boy's second-grade class during lunch break at the Ecole Lalande in Roxboro, reprimanded the latter for not eating "like Canadian ways," using only one utensil.

The reports also said the school principal himself had agreed with the teacher's handling of the boy's "table behavior."

FIL-CANADIANS/ A2

'We work from the shadows'

WILLEM Stil helping Aetas long after Pinatubo eruption in 1991.

By Tonette Orejas
PDI General Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Seven years since Queen Elizabeth II bestowed on her the title of Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1999 for her humanitarian work among the Aeta people of Mt. Pinatubo, Jeanette Wallace is still at it, doing her part to endeavors where the tribes put their minds and hearts into.

"We work from the shadows," the 59-year-old Wallace said in an interview on Thursday. She was referring to herself, her seven co-officers, nine trustees and members of the group she founded, the Entrepreneurs Volunteers Association Charity Foundation (EVACF).

The group taps donations in the Philippines and from across the globe, and raises revenues from gift items they help market, and its efforts have brightened up communities that seek help.

The latest was the successful

WE WORK/ A6

Schirmer, 91: Marcos critic, Filipinos' friend

By Waldon Bello

WHEN DANIEL BOONE SCHIRMER passed away in Cambridge, Massachusetts, last month, it felt like the end of an era for many of the people that participated in the movement against Ferdinand Marcos in the United States.

Boone, along with Severina Rivera Dana, Barbara Cari-Gantioqui and Tim and Linda McCoy, founded the Friends of the Filipino People in November 1973. Over the next 13 years, he became one of the first known Congressional critics of the American policy of support for the Marcos regime.

Combining fierce determination with tremendous energy, Boone spoke at meetings and conferences throughout the United States, wrote articles demanding withdrawal of US bases from

SCHIRMER/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Bro. Mike working anew to reconcile GMA, Erap

By John Leloy Javellana

EL SHADDAI LEADER BRO. Mariano "Mike" Velarde yesterday said he was pursuing reconciliation efforts between President Macapagal-Arroyo and her detained predecessor President Joseph Estrada, to resolve the present political crisis hounding the nation.

"It (reconciliation talks) is still going on and in fact it is what I am meeting on because it is easy to understand the root cause of our present political troubles. It all started when former President Estrada was stripped of his power without due process and you know that up to now people continue to support him, in fact majority of our people," Velarde said in a forum of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines.

ARROYO

ESTRADA

Unity covenant

"Velarde's statement no longer surprised the remaining power bucks willing to cooperate and put back to normalcy our Philippine conditions," said Velarde.

He said Estrada wanted to help the country by leading an "agricultural revolution" to solve the problems of hunger and poverty.

He said he had no reason to doubt Estrada's words.

"He's a man of his words," he said.

Velarde cited to broker a unity covenant between Mrs Arroyo and Estrada as in August last year but it was scuttled at the last minute. Mrs Arroyo said Estrada chose not to appear together to sign the covenant before a huge El Shaddai gathering at the Quirino Grandstand fronted by Velarde's birthday.

Velarde revealed he was the one who convinced Estrada to abandon Malacañang at the height of the Edsa II people power revolt to avoid bloodshed.

"And as you know I really stood with him upon the last hour and I have stood with him before even (before there could be) bloodshed during that so-called Edsa Dos revolution," Velarde said.

"I was the one who personally convinced him to get out of the palace during that day. I told him at least you're the only president without blood in your hands and he willingly left the palace," he added.

He said he continued talking to Estrada since then.

"My only desire, Brother Mike, is to really have my name cleared and be vindicated and be able to help our country, our economically retreating to poorer. That's what he told me and I believe him," Velarde said.

Velarde said some hardliners in Mrs Arroyo's camp are the ill-unifying blocks to the reconciliation.

"That's how I see it although from line of reasoning which I think is legitimate is that they could not interfere with the running years unless which I am not insisting to do away with. It should push through and it should be confirmed by the Sandiganbayan," he said.

Velarde was cognizant Mrs Arroyo could guarantee Estrada's safety in case his name in the acknowledged the President would not interfere with the courts.

Meeting of minds

"What this President can do really is pave the way for a meeting of the minds," he said.

"You know perhaps on the side of Erap, that can assure the President that there will be no chaos that will happen once he's out and on the part of the President what she can do really is comply with what is in the agreement," Velarde said.

He said there must be some compromises whereas the two sides could not come to an agreement.

Velarde indicated he hinted that Estrada was not guilty of plunder for which he is standing trial.

"(In) the case against Erap the penalty is death and according to our laws when the penalty is death the questions must be resolved beyond any reasonable doubt and grasping from the counts of hearings and interesting pieces there were some kind of doubt that's coming up," Velarde said.

Velarde expressed optimism the reconciliation effort would soon bear fruit.

"The effort is still going on. I'm still working on it and I think we can reach an agreement in time," Velarde said. Asked when, he said: "I would not speculate but indicate do hope, pero."

Yap rejoins Cabinet as PMS chief

By Gil C. Cabacungan

NEARLY A YEAR AFTER RESIGNING from the Cabinet due to his wireless charges filed against his family, former Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap is now back in the corridors of power of Malacañang as head of the Presidential Management Staff.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced Yap's appointment as PMS chief this afternoon at the Palace press briefing.

Yap will replace Renato Velasco who became PMS chief a little over a month ago when the post was left vacated by Rigoberto Tiglao who was named Philippine ambassador to Greece.

Velasco, who has been associated with the President since her days at the Senate, has been appointed chair of the PHIC, Philippine Development Corp.

Yap was forced to resign in June last year shortly after the Bureau of Internal Revenue filed tax evasion charges against a real estate firm owned by his family.

The suit was dismissed in October by the Department of Justice for lack of evidence, in December last year, Yap was tapped by the President to oversee the program to create 1.5 million jobs a year.

Yap's re-entry into the Cabinet comes more than two months after the Arroyo Cabinet which appears to have gotten over the abrupt resignations of the so-called Hyatt 10, a group of Cabinet officials and government executives last year.

A few months ago, the President appointed her youngest brother Diosdado Macapagal Arroyo as Presidential Chief of Staff and former Rep. Rolando Andaya as Budget Secretary.

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malaysia
going beyond expectations

THE US Navy hospital ship, USNS Mercy arrives in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Tuesday. The Mercy arrived in Hawaii en route to a five-month humanitarian mission to the Philippines and other points in Southeast Asia. AP

US hospital ship sails off on mission to RP

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii—The US Navy hospital ship USNS Mercy sailed in Hawaii on Sunday en route to a five-month humanitarian mission to the Philippines and other points in Southeast Asia.

The ship follows the white-hulled vessel's voyage to Indonesia last year to treat victims of the December 2004 tsunami.

"It's a demonstration of our interest, our commitment to helping people in the region," said Adm. Gary Roughead, US fleet forces commander. "We're going to areas where the assistance is needed."

The mission comes as the United States military strives to improve its image in the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries Washington considers critical in its efforts to combat terrorism.

Earlier this year, the United States donated $11 million worth of hospital equipment to the Indonesian armed forces.

The Navy hopes to arrange for the Mercy to visit Indonesia on the current trip, but plans to do so have not been completed.

Hundreds of doctors and nurses from nongovernmental organizations...both American and from the countries the Mercy will be visiting...plan to join the mission.

Dr. Samuel K. Ito, president of Honolulu-based Aloha Medical Mission, said officials aboard the Mercy would enable his doctors to offer patients a higher level of medical care.

"I will allow us to do more surgery because there is a comfortable hotbed where we can do the operations," said Ito. "Before we used to go to the hospitals that are not very well equipped. [The Mercy] has the latest technology."

The ship's more than 1,000 crew, a QM note said, and a dental surgery suite among other equipment.

The Mercy will go to the southern Philippines—an area Aloha Medical Mission has not been able to visit in the past because of the dangers posed by the decades-long secessionist war being waged by Filipino Islamic insurgents.

Navy public health experts will pay close attention to the quality of the drinking water in the areas they visit and monitor for tropical diseases such as malaria and dengue fever.

Capt. Gail L. Hathaway said the hospital personnel in following up on the work the AID (Safety the Mercy's tsunami relief mission.

"There's plenty of follower work. We'll track some of the most important things that we would watch the most people. An area we can go back and add to what we did," said Hathaway, an officer with the Navy Environmental Preventive Medicine Unit 6 based at Pearl Harbor.

Last year, the Mercy treated more than 227,000 patients, performed 400 surgeries and carried out 8,900 dental procedures in Indonesia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea. AP

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ADEXHIBIT

Wage boards blamed for workers' plight

By Michael Lim Ubac

LEGAZPI CITY—YESTERDAY blamed the bipartite wages and productivity boards for the government's glaring failure to alleviate the plight of the working class in the country for the last 16 years.

House Deputy Majority Leader Lorenzo Carillo of Batangas Rep. Eric and Rep. Douglas Cagas of Bayan del Sur sought the revision of Republic Act No. 6727 amid charges the labor groups that regions at wage boards had become "pro-capitalist" and insensitive to workers' plights.

The law, otherwise known as the Wage Rationalization Act enacted on July 25, 1986, provided for the creation of the regional wage boards to determine and fix the minimum wage rates in the various regions.

The two lawmakers are members of the House committee on labor and employment.

Carillo and Cagas said Congress should re-assess the relevance of the law since wage boards only granted token increases in wages and allowances over the years, thereby failing to mitigate the impact of the rising prices of commodities and cost of services on workers and their families.

On Tuesday, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Rep. Rodolfo Biazon pushed for a bipartisan wage hike despite President Macapagal-Arroyo's statement on Labor Day hinting it up to regional wage boards to decide on the workers' demand for across-the-board pay hikes.

Both supported House Bill No. 245, principal authored by Nograles, party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran, seeking a P125 daily pay hike for private employees and a P3,000 increase in the monthly salaries of government workers.

Carillo said a review of RA 6727 was intended to improve the boards' performance.

"A review would guide us on how the wage boards can be more responsive to workers and change the labor sector's perspective that they are pro-capitalists. There is no need to abolish the wage boards. All we need to do is to improve them for our workers," said Carillo.

Carillo stressed that while ruling the regional wage boards over bipartisan must the latter had been mandated by law to act on wage hike petitions.

Cagas pointed out that aside from allegedly being "pro-capitalists," the regional wage boards had been accused of being used-passed in setting on wage hike petitions.

He also noted the law's prohibition on granting pay hikes more than once a year unless there were supervening events.

"Congress has to closely scrutinize these supervening events so that businessmen can't use this provision to protect their interests, and to give the boards more leeway in granting pay hikes," he said.

The Bikolnong Mayo Uno started the campaign for a P125 wage increase in 1999 but it was only filed in Congress in 2001.

"Based on the experiences of labor groups, we cannot expect any concrete and significant wage increases from the regional wage boards, only denials or delaying tactics. Congress should break this impasse on the virtual wage freeze and lay the ground for a legislated nationwide P125 wage hike for private sector workers," Beltran said.

Statistics from the National Wages and Productivity Commission showed that the daily living wage in the National Capital Region had already reached P746.00 for a family of six, as of March 2006.

The wage boards had pegged the daily minimum wage rate in the NCR at P325. But Beltran said the real value of P125 had shrunk to P65.

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Shades of Marcos, SC says of GMA's 1017

Tribune editor bails high court ruling

By Alcuin Papa, Michael Lim Ubac and Christine Avendaño

THE EDITOR IN CHIEF OF THE Daily Tribune hailed the Supreme Court decision on Proclamation 1017 as a victory not only for her newspaper but for the entire media industry as well.

"This is a rare gift the Supreme Court has given to media (its) Press Freedom Day. Ironically, this is victory for our freedoms," Hino-o Cecilio-Gilbuena told the reporters.

"It is clear from the Supreme Court decision that while the President has the right to declare emergency, and even martial law, she cannot go beyond that scope by abusing this power when the danger down on media and impinges on the freedoms of the people."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Palace would leave it to Solicitor General Antonio Ed-uardo to decide if a motion for reconsideration would be filed.

"In a way, we are glad that, at least, the high court dismissed the government's petition on the ground that the petitioners have no right to represent media, and the President's powers under the Constitution to call out the Armed Forces as its Commander-in-Chief to prevent or suppress lawless violence," Bunye said.

Opposition lawmakers said the court's decision bolstered their claim that Ms Arroyo had fictionized hearings and vowed to use the ruling as an ammunition to seek her impeachment.

● Minority Leader Francis Escudero: "For the third time we have been given common ground in our assertion that Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has abused her powers ... This also proves, as we have said, the dictatorial tendencies of GMA."

● Rep. Teodoro Locsin: "The Supreme Court acted correctly."

With a report from Philip C. Tubeza

How they voted

FOURTEEN OF THE 15 SC justices participated in the decision. Senior Associate Justice Reynato S. Puno was on leave.

Justice Angelina Sandoval Gutierrez's 73-page decision was concurred in by 10 justices—Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban, Leonardo A. Quisumbing, Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Antonio T. Carpio, Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez, Conchita Carpio-Morales, Romeo J. Callejo Sr., Adolfo S. Azcuna, Minita V. Chico-Nazario and Cancio C. Garcia.

Both dissenting and four concurring opinions were separate concurring opinions. The Chief Justice's concurring opinion was joined by Carpio, Carpio-Morales, and Callejo Sr.

Justice Diana G. Teehankee's dissenting opinion was joined by Justices Renato C. Corona and Presbitero J. Velasco Jr.

"We all know that it was PP 1081 which granted President Marcos legislative power. In resolving dissent under the guise of protecting the people's constitutionally enshrined liberty."

Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, who voted with the majority, warned that authors of PP 1017 "may be setting the outer limits of presidential prerogatives and the preserve more of the court in subsequently declaring that executive issuances exceed those limits."

"They are playing with fire and, unless prudently restrained, they may sow the wind and reap the whirlwind," he said.

Panganiban said history would not "forgive this court if it allows such misdeference."

The decision said PP 1017 did not justify the imposition of warrantless arrests, the breaking of street rallies, the raid on the office of The Daily Tribune and prior restraint on the press.

Lawless violence

"The mass sudden arrests of Representative Satur Ocampo and Ronald Llamas, the dispersal and warrantless arrest of the KMU and the Nafita-SKU members during the rallies, in the absence of proof that [they] were committing any act constituting lawless violence ... the imposition of standards on media or any form of prior restraint on the press, as well as the warrantless search of Tribune offices and the subsequent seizure of its articles for publication and other materials, are declared unconstitutional."

The Court also declared PP 1017 "is constitutional insofar as it constitutes a call by President Macapagal-Arroyo on the AFP to prevent or suppress lawless violence."

However, the provisions of PP 1017 commanding the AFP to enforce laws not related to lawless violence as well as decrees promulgated by the President are declared unconstitutional," the court said.

The court also said that while the provision in PP 1017 declaring a state of national emergency under Article VII of the Constitution was constitutional, "such declaration does not authorize the President to take over privately owned utilities or business affected with public interest without prior legislation."

Article VII provides that the President shall have control of the executive department and shall ensure the laws are faithfully executed.

The decision also said that General Order No. 5—which the security forces used to implement the emergency proclamation—"is constitutional since it provides a valid standard for the exercise of discretion by declaring illegal public assemblies and rallies inciting to sedition under PP 1017, Public-safety laws like Presidential Decree No. 1829 penalizing the obstruction of justice, and the Revised Penal Code penalizing crimes against public order."

Code of conduct

"I think we just have to explain the specific grounds where we can invoke executive privilege. They should also give our executives enough lead time and send the questions beforehand so they can look into the matter well," he said.

To ease tensions between lawmakers and Malacañang, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles yesterday prepared the formulation of a "code of conduct for legislative inquiries" before Congress adjourns on June 8.

Nograles said House and Senate leaders should meet to discuss the matter.

He also said the Senate should coordinate on measures to evaluate the impact of approving oil price hikes and the expanded value-added tax rather than proceed with an inquiry.

In fact, he said, the Senate should wait until the Supreme Court ruling on EO 464 becomes final and executory before resuming the investigations.

"We should suspend all these investigations and work full-time for the passage of very important measures and give way to the crafting of some sort of guidelines on how to conduct these investigations, and at the same time, tunnel focus between Congress and the Executive," Nograles said in a statement.

"The investigations have become a platform by some members of the Opposition to launch baseless, if not malicious, accusations, for mere grandstanding, intrigue-mongering, muddlingup and witch-hunting without the real intention of crafting measures related to this inquiry," he said.

Nograles said the code of conduct should require that Congress send a written invitation to officials of the executive branch 15 days before their scheduled appearance at hearings "in aid of legislation."

"The invitation should contain with sufficient particularity the law that prompted the inquiry, the general area of the subject of inquiry, and the questions to be propounded or the measure pursued," he said.

Nograles added that it should be explained how the resource person's presence would help in crafting the "proposed contemplated legislation."

DOF press conference

At the time of the Senate hearing, Teves was en route to Dalla to attend a conference of the Asian Development Bank, and Ibarra was at a Cabinet meeting.

In a phone interview yesterday with the Inquirer, Ibarra said he was not given enough time to study the specific grounds where Congress could invoke executive privilege.

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"They should also give our executives enough lead time and send the questions beforehand so they can look into the matter well," he said.

"All that the executive officers could invoke (in Gavidi's case) is executive privilege," he said. "I don't see their observation that some subpoenaed officials were wearing Talisay with the intention 'that Gloria Steps' and their concern on assumption that (Gavi) was the leader of the group," she added.

The Court also pointed out that PP 1017 "does not authorize but (do) not preclude the emergency to temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest without authority from Congress."

Tinga dissents

In his 58-page dissenting opinion, Associate Justice Dante Tinga said he "regrets ... that the majority, by its ruling, has impermissibly enlarged the powers in the framework of defeating paper tigers."

"I agree with the majority on some points, but I cannot join the majority opinion, as it proceeds to rule on nonjusticiable issues based on facts that have not materialized, departing as they do from the plain language of the challenged issuances to the extent of avowed granting the Chief Executive."

He also scrolled at the court's conjunction of PP 1017 to Marcos' martial law order.

Tinga said the "nothing in Proclamation 1017 or any issuance by any president since (Corazon) Aquino names even close to martial-law provisions (GO)."

"This is surely much welcome relief to who suffered or stood by those oppressed under Proclamation 1081 to ever suggest that the issuances Proclamation 1017 is of equivalent import," he said.

Palace tells Senate: Mind your manners

Front page A1

accusations of bribery in the bills on franchise renewal, reduction of individual income tax rates, universalization of fiscal incentives and measures to curb smuggling would be the first test of Palace compliance with the Supreme Court ruling nullifying portions of Executive Order No. 464.

The order issued by the President bars government executives from appearing at congressional inquiries without her say-so.

Angered by the three officials' absence on Tuesday as well as their having received only letters of invitation, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said, among other words of displeasure: "It fell with ease."

But Bunye yesterday said his absence at the Senate hearing was not a show of disrespect but a matter of his combining schedules.

Not yet final

At a briefing yesterday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita pointed out that EO 464 was "temporarily because of what the Palace viewed as the Senate's rough treatment of execu-tive officials, especially National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales during a hearing on the contract signed by the government with the US Subic Fleet Trouble.

Ermita said that while the administration did not see fit to invoke EO 464 at the hearing, it could have done so if it wanted to.

"For all intents and purposes, the ruling on EO 464 is not final because it is subject to a motion for reconsideration," he said.

Senior Secretary Raul Gonzalez said a similar view is coming in the defense of Teves, Ibarra and Bunye.

"Since the Supreme Court's decision is not final (the Cabinet may be accosted by appearing," Gonzalez said) reporters, citing the legal principle of estoppel, which means one from alleging something one had previously denied.

"If we appear, it will not have an estoppel that the decision is final. I think that is the reason why they did not appear, although there was effort [to force]," he said. "Maybe they have consulted with the Judges (Solicitor General Antonio) Eduardo."

Gonzalez also said the Department of Justice and Ermita's office would issue a memorandum to guide Cabinet officials in the matter of invitations to congressional inquiries.

Ermita said that while the Supreme Court on EO 464 [first] it does not mean that with the decision, we cannot totally invoke executive privilege," Ermita said.

He also said that as far as he can remember, the absence of the three officials was not "disrespectful."

Teves was abroad and Bunye had personally advised Ibarra and Ermita that he would be sending his opposite Undersecretary Ibarra Hernandez, to represent him.

According to Ermita, sometimes there is a need to be angry because even before the high court decided on the issue, the administration had been judicious in implementing EO 464.

Of the 123 Senate hearings called as of May 3, he said, Malacañang had declined appearances or exercised from appearing in only 11 instances. He said these were the hearings on the Hyatt-Bataan project, the alleged diversion of the fertilizer fund, and the "Hello Garci" tapes.

Code of conduct

"I think we just have to explain the specific grounds where we can invoke executive privilege. They should also give our executives enough lead time and send the questions beforehand so they can look into the matter well," he said.

To ease tensions between lawmakers and Malacañang, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles yesterday prepared the formulation of a "code of conduct for legislative inquiries" before Congress adjourns on June 8.

Nograles said House and Senate leaders should meet to discuss the matter.

He also said the Senate should coordinate on measures to evaluate the impact of approving oil price hikes and the expanded value-added tax rather than proceed with an inquiry.

In fact, he said, the Senate should wait until the Supreme Court ruling on EO 464 becomes final and executory before resuming the investigations.

"We should suspend all these investigations and work full-time for the passage of very important measures and give way to the crafting of some sort of guidelines on how to conduct these investigations, and at the same time, tunnel focus between Congress and the Executive," Nograles said in a statement.

"The investigations have become a platform by some members of the Opposition to launch baseless, if not malicious, accusations, for mere grandstanding, intrigue-mongering, muddlingup and witch-hunting without the real intention of crafting measures related to this inquiry," he said.

Nograles said the code of conduct should require that Congress send a written invitation to officials of the executive branch 15 days before their scheduled appearance at hearings "in aid of legislation."

"The invitation should contain with sufficient particularity the law that prompted the inquiry, the general area of the subject of inquiry, and the questions to be propounded or the measure pursued," he said.

Nograles added that it should be explained how the resource person's presence would help in crafting the "proposed contemplated legislation."

DOF press conference

At the time of the Senate hearing, Teves was en route to Dalla to attend a conference of the Asian Development Bank, and Ibarra was at a Cabinet meeting.

In a phone interview yesterday with the Inquirer, Ibarra said he was not given enough time to study the specific grounds where Congress could invoke executive privilege.

"They should also give our executives enough lead time and send the questions beforehand so they can look into the matter well," he said.

"All that the executive officers could invoke (in Gavidi's case) is executive privilege," he said. "I don't see their observation that some subpoenaed officials were wearing Talisay with the intention 'that Gloria Steps' and their concern on assumption that (Gavi) was the leader of the group," she added.

The Court also pointed out that PP 1017 "does not authorize but (do) not preclude the emergency to temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest without authority from Congress."

Tinga dissents

In his 58-page dissenting opinion, Associate Justice Dante Tinga said he "regrets ... that the majority, by its ruling, has impermissibly enlarged the powers in the framework of defeating paper tigers."

"I agree with the majority on some points, but I cannot join the majority opinion, as it proceeds to rule on nonjusticiable issues based on facts that have not materialized, departing as they do from the plain language of the challenged issuances to the extent of avowed granting the Chief Executive."

He also scrolled at the court's conjunction of PP 1017 to Marcos' martial law order.

Tinga said the "nothing in Proclamation 1017 or any issuance by any president since (Corazon) Aquino names even close to martial-law provisions (GO)."

"This is surely much welcome relief to who suffered or stood by those oppressed under Proclamation 1081 to ever suggest that the issuances Proclamation 1017 is of equivalent import," he said.

RP media pay 'price for outspokenness'

Front page A1

reporter, presently rest up and fear," Bunye said in a news conference.

He said corruption did not justify the killing of media practitioners.

"We are not perfect, either as media or as individuals. But let us never allow this to be used to justify the killings and other assaults on our colleagues and the continued attempts to suppress us. To do so can only bring more assaults and can constitute to the culture of impunity that has already cost us and our profession dearly," Bunye said.

He noted that 77 journalists had been killed in the country since 1986 when the dictator Ferdinand Marcos was ousted. The number has increased also during President Macapagal-Arroyo's watch, making her administration "the deadliest for 10 years just as bad," said Bunye.

Latest casualty

The latest casualty was Nicolas Cernades, 56, a Bombo-band commentator, who was gunned down in Mandaluyong on Tuesday night. Cernades also reportedly worked as a "confidential agent" of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Police were investigating the attack by "two men riding on a motorcycle just after Cernades left his home. He was hit in the chest and armpits and was already dead when he was brought to Lourdes Hospital. Motive for the slaying was not immediately known.

Ermita said that the killings of journalists were "a glaring indictment of the Philippine government's commitment to freedom of the press and of expression."

"With the exception of three cases, most of our colleagues' murders has been solved and no perpetrator has been brought to justice," he said.

Most dangerous

The Paris-based Reporters sans Frontieres said in its 2006 report that Filipino journalists had "paid a high price for their outspokenness" after seven journalists were killed this year. It said the Philippines was the most dangerous country for media people after Iraq and Nepal.

"Despite discussing more extensive laws the freedom of expression is still violated, the government is struggling to rebuild confidence," Frederic Ghesi, director of the organization's bureau, said.

Ghesi, in a letter to officials, urged to stop the press from doing its job of safeguarding democracy.

"Grappling with communist and Islamist guerrillas, the government, under pressure from the army, has given free rein to the military to act as prosecutor, judge and executioner in its controversial anti-terror legislation," the group said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday insisted that the country's press remained among the freest in the world.

"We clearly understand the role of the press in a democratic society and we encourage greater interaction among media practitioners on their corresponding responsibilities in truth and justice," Bunye said in a statement.

Bunye's statement was made a day after Gen. Generoso Senga, Armed Forces chief of staff, issued an order restricting media movements inside government headquarters in Senga yesterday refused to admit he issued the memorandum. He said it was a text message saying simply that he had an ill feeling against media.

Growing authoritarianism

House Deputy Minority Leader Bello Golez yesterday said the military leadership should recall its repressive policy on the press, denying this as a first. "Maybe they are hiding something," he said.

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo also urged journalists to unite and put a stop to the killings of media men and decried "growing authoritarianism" of the Arroyo.

The Philippine Press Institute lamented that two months after its group lifted a wedding ceremony of emergency imposed in February in fewer as alleged coup plot, the government continued to clamp down on the media.

PPI chief executive Inez Arnaldo said in a statement: "Instead of [the] government's promise to [the] lifting of an armed-winning television program for its interview with a fugitive soldier linked to a failed coup plot in July 2003."

Philip C. Tubeza, Dona Z. Pazzibugan, AP, IHT

Corrections

IN THE APRIL 30 ISSUE, a story on Page 10 of the Lifestyle section—"Dana celebrates treasured friends"—misstated the name of one of the organizations that helped fence Centennial Road in the renovation of "Rachel's," Installations by Rocky Cenia, Head architect of the Philippines" as the hotel lobby. The presentation was made in cooperation with Filipino Heritage Architect—not the Heritage Conservation Society.

* * *

IN THE MAY 2 ISSUE, a story on Page A2—"Gov't sees P28.1B increase from 06"—misstated that the government was expecting a P28.1-billion windfall from the expanded value-added tax collection this year. Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said that the figure was an error and should have been P28.1 billion projected for 2006. Andaya said the P28.1 billion simply referred to the amount of proposed projects that would be funded if the P71.76-billion target was exceeded due to a bigger tax take on higher oil prices.

* * *

Readers may mail their corrects for corrections to Inquirer Reader's Action Center, 5th Floor, Philippine Daily Inquirer Bldg., Chino Roces Ave. cor. Tordesillas Street, Makati City; fax No. (632) 897-8332; e-mail address: inquirer@inquirer.com.ph.

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SMALL boat rakes a freezer containing the bodies of dead Chinese fishermen.

Navy to probe attack on Sino boat

THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED THE Philippines to investigate an attack on a Chinese fishing boat in disputed waters in the South China Sea which left four crewmen dead, and Foreign Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the Philippine Navy was conducting the investigation.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said that Chinese consular officials had told it they were uncertain of the nationality of the attackers or their vessel as it "had no flag or identifying marks."

But the Chinese paper Southern Daily reported that last Thursday's attack on the Jingbei2008 2 in the disputed Spratly Islands would have been carried out by a Filipino vessel. It did not say how it arrived at that conclusion.

Philippine Navy spokesman Capt. Ernesto Mildaluzan said the navy had no boats in the area.

The Southern Daily quoted a survivor as saying that a Philippine boat was behind the attack, and that "six of (the attackers) wore camouflage clothes while the other seven were casually dressed."

"The attack appeared to be organized," the report said.

The Beijing-based paper also reported that there was one Chinese fisherman still missing after the attack on China's southern Nansa Island with three wounded crewmembers in stable condition.

Ermita said that the Navy was investigating but cautioned against assuming quickly that the attackers were Filipinos.

Very good relations

"The Chinese themselves said they are still verifying the details of the incident," Ermita said.

"We have very good relations with the People's Republic of China," Ermita added. "It is only right that we do the best we can to ensure that things are explored, if indeed there are things done by our nationals."

Political and security analyst Rommel Banlaoi, a Spratlys expert, said the attack was "a piracy issue" rather than a state territorial conflict.

Banlaoi said pirates from Indonesia, Malaysia and the southern Philippines are known to attack ships in the area, and we are discriminately assume that the attackers were Filipinos.

"The South China Sea is a major flash point and reports like this could trigger conflict," Banlaoi said.

The Spratlys are a chain of more than 100 small islands or reefs that are believed to sit atop vast mineral deposits. They are claimed partially or entirely by Brunei, China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines.

All claimants are governed by a code of conduct to maintain the status quo and avoid actions that could incite armed confrontation in the area.

AFP with a report from Christine O. Avendaño

J.Y. Campos is dead; 84

JOSE YAO CAMPOS, FOUNDER AND CHAIRperson of United Laboratories Inc., the United Group of Companies and Greenhills Group of Companies, died on May 1 at the age of 84.

He is survived by wife Jimenez; children Jes, Butch and Ollie, Jeffrey, and Elizabeth; and grandchildren Chinwe and Jacqueline, Christy, Miles, Jeanette, Jaclyn and Luke, Jay, Janelle, Jamie, and Mika.

Campos was one of the trusted cronies of former President Ferdinand Marcos. He helped finance Marcos' election campaigns and set up Independent Realty Corp., the Philippine company of the strongman's business empire.

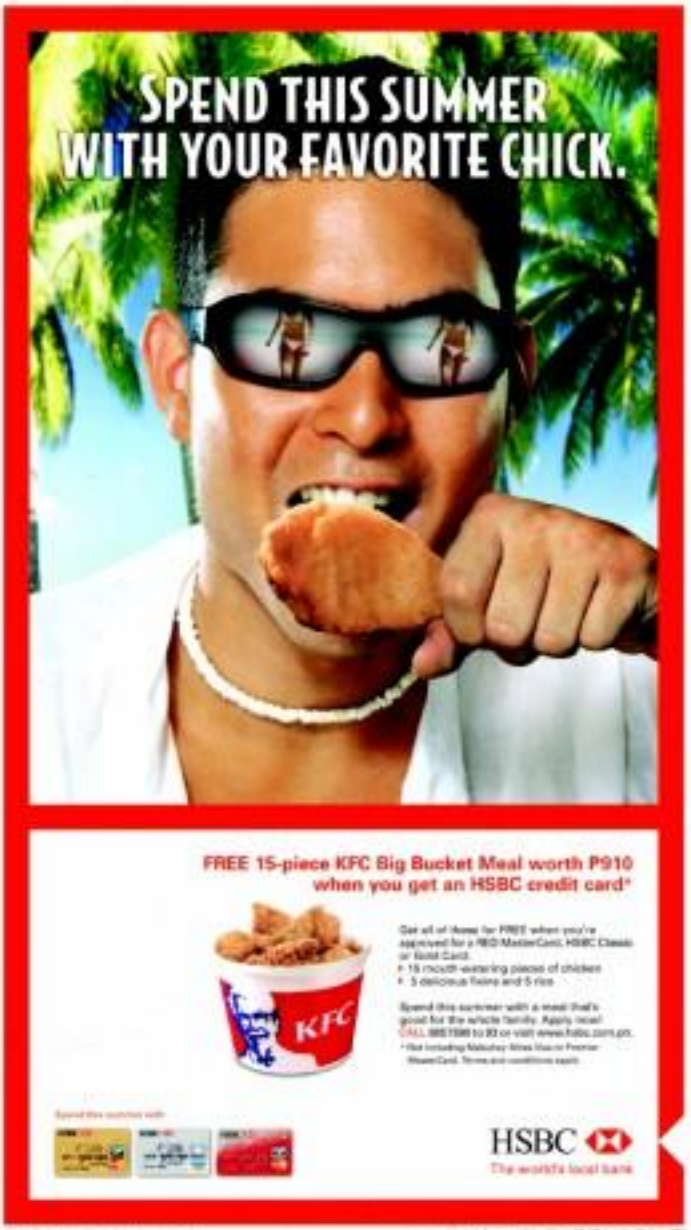
Other companies organized by Campos for the Marcoses were Prime Holdings Corp., Master Assets Corp., Neon Properties Inc., Century Wealth Group, Performance Investment Corp., Anchor Estate Inc., Green Timber Inc., Universal Holdings Corp., Universal Silk Corp., Easthaven Holdings Corp., Texas Oriental Holdings Corp. and San Mariano Mining Corp.

In return, Marcos gave government support to Yao's companies, including Unilab, which was just up in 1953 and became one of Asia's largest pharmaceutical firms.

When Marcos was still a congressman, Campos enlisted his help in getting dollar needed to import medicines and chemicals. Later on, Unilab accounted for at least 60 percent of government medicine purchases.

After Marcos' ouster in 1986, Campos was ordered IRC and other dummy corporations to the Presidential Commission on Good Government as part of a compromise agreement. All in all, he handed over P250 million in cash, 187 certificates of title covering 1,600 hectares of land all over the Philippines, and shares of stocks in 27 corporations worth billions of pesos. His actions granted him immunity from criminal and civil charges.

Campos was able to keep Unilab, after proving that Marcos did not have a single share of stock in the company. The Campos family's real estate firm Greenhills Development Corp. built Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club, Hillsborough Subdivision and the Nina Central Shopping Complex. *PDI Research*



THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, May 4, 2006
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 6:20-41
Gospel: John 6:44-51

Jesus addressed the crowd, "No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me, and I will raise him up on the last day. It has been written in the Prophets: They shall all be taught by God. So whoever hears and learns from the Father comes to me.

"Not as if anyone has seen the Father except the One who comes from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, I say to you, whoever believes has everlasting life.

"I am the bread of life. Though your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, they died. But here you have the bread which comes from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die.

"I am the living bread which has come from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever. The bread I shall give is my flesh and I will give it for the life of the world."

Commentary:

Philip becomes a preacher missionary and converts an Ethiopian. Moving with his understanding the book of Isaiah, he connects it to Jesus crucified and risen. Along the way the notion of Jesus getting understanding and rereading himself along the way), he baptizes the man. Then the Spirit snatches Philip away and he finds himself somewhere else!

Philip has been taught and the meaning of the Scriptures with others, and raised the face of God in Jesus to others, we are taught by God and learn something of the eternal life of God.

(Gospel Publications Inc., 8 Mapagsulo St., 1st Floor, Quezon City, CP 192, Box 4, Diliman, 1100 Quezon City; tel.: 921-1644; fax: 921-7620; e-mail: gospel@i-e.g; Website: http://www.dailygospel.org (Current Publication Inc.) (c) http://www.dailygospel.org/Comments to the Philippines)

Fil-Canadians raise race issue in boy's ordeal

From page A1

When the child's mother phoned the school to complain, the principal justified the action because "your son runs like a pig," she reports said.

The mother and other parents outraged by the incident said the child's way of eating—filling a spoon by pushing the food on his plate with a fork—was "the traditional Filipino way," an expression of his native culture that was supposedly welcome in this society.

Complaints filed

At a briefing yesterday, IAPA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said the Philippine Embassy in Ottawa led by ambassador Jose Brillantes was supporting the complaint lodged by the mother in the local school board, the Commission for Racial Harmonies Secretariat.

He said another complaint filed in behalf of the 7-year-old boy by the Centre for Research Action on Race Relations (CRARR) "unintentionally" was also lodged.

Asuque said the CRARR, a Montreal-based nonprofit organization defending victims of discrimination on account of race, religion, ethnic roots or nationality, was seeking moral damages in its complaint against the teacher.

"The embassy considers this an affront to Filipino culture and continues to vigorously support any action that will validate a conclusion of racial discrimination," he said.

Also suffering behind the boy and his mother are members of the Philippine Association of Montreal, Asuque said.

'Yucky and disgusting'

The teacher punished the boy "more than 20 times this year" by making him sit in one area while by himself, away from his classmates, The Chronicle reported.

The mother, who was misinformed in the report, serves as the "main enemy" for the boy's classmates, the paper said.

The boy said that when he ate with a spoon and fork instead of only one utensil, the teacher would move him to a table to sit by himself, The Chronicle reported.

The mother, a contract worker originally from Ilocos Sur who was migrated to Montreal in 2000, phoned the school principal two days later to complain.

The reply coming from the principal, identified by The Chronicle as Emmanuel Bergeron, further shocked the mother and nearly drove her to tears. "Madame, you are in Canada. Here in Canada, you should eat the way Canadians eat."

The paper was quoting Bergeron just the mother's account of the phone conversation.

"If you want eat like a pig, he has to go to another table because there is the way we do it and how we're going to do it every time," the principal was further quoted as saying.

'Prejudiced and racist'

"I find it very prejudiced and it's racist, the Bergeron is supposed to be acting like a professional," the paper quoted the mother as saying.

"This is supposed to be a free country with free expressions of culture and religion. This is how we eat, we eat with a fork and spoon," she said.

"So no, that's not a day-to-day event in her freshmen house and is done to coughing her studies in early childhood education, the report added.

Horse racing czar gets ax over misuse of gov't funds

From page A1

Eduardo Ermita yesterday confirmed the dismissal of Ebdaj who was fired in the middle of a lengthy investigation by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC).

She had previously suspended Ebdaj upon the recommendation of the PAGC. But this was after repeated orders from Arroyo to get Ebdaj to step down.

He promised to give a copy of the PAGC report, but no such report was made available at press time.

Sources close to the PAGC investigation said Ebdaj had been dispensing in his private funds assigned to the races in prize money that the Philracom had raised from private sponsors of the stakes races.

According to the same sources, the races in prize money, mainly from bettors' losses, were used by Philracom, should have been deposited in the commissioner's bank account.

They said the PAGC had ruled that Ebdaj's action constituted theft of public funds.

According to the sources, the PAGC also entered the explanation of Ebdaj that the funds had been doing not considered normal practice by his predecessors at the Philracom.

The Palace yesterday said PAGC Chair Constancio B. De Guzman was invited today to press conference where he will brief reporters on the results of the investigation of Ebdaj as well as Salvacion M. Balanon, administrator of the National Dairy Authority.

Last year, a case was filed against Ebdaj in connection with his alleged violation of and Republic Act No. 3019 (The Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act), Republic Act No. 6713 (The Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials) and the Revised Penal Code's articles pertaining to malversation and illegal use of public funds.

Ebdaj was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo for a three-year term in 2003.

Schirmer, 91: Marcos critic, Filipinos' friend

From page A1

the Philippines, lobbied the US Congress to cut off aid to Marcos, and managed the Cambridge-Goodwind College program to US-RP relations.

He was a friend and comrade of Filipino activists from all points of the political spectrum.

At first residence at 17 Garey St. in Cambridge, Boone and his wife and lifelong political partner, Peggy, also played hosts to countless from the Philippines seeking his views and advice, like Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Senator Jose W. Diokno and Benigno Aquino Jr., Bobby Monteverde, Randy David, Ed de la Torre, Chanto Planas and Roland Simbulan.

He visitors invariably become his lifelong friends.

Perhaps the greatest irony of Boone's life was provided by the moment between his and Aquino's plane journey and his arrest. He got a from his great-great-uncle, the famous businessman and "Indian fighter" Zenas Boone, who played a key role in the westward expansion of the United States.

In typical fashion, he took this "coincidence" in stride and joked about it.

Love affair

Boone's love affair with the Philippines, according to his daughter Kathy Sagsay, began when he enrolled as a Bank of Boston at Boston University in the 1960s.

With the protests against the Vietnam War in full swing, he discovered the nation's peace movement, led by Jose Ma. Sison and the Kabataang Makabayan, against the annexation and invasion of the Philippines at the turn of the century.

His study of the *ilustrados* (end of the century) US-RP relations led to a Ph.D. dissertation that was later published under the title "Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War."

That book revealed the main spring of Boone's activism. Like Twain's earlier generation of anti-imperialists, he believed that the United States could not be a truly democratic republic unless it renounced its imperial pretensions.

Activist commitment

Boone's involvement with the Philippine struggle was his second major political engagement in a lifetime of activist commitment.

As a young student at Harvard University during the Depression years in the 1930s, Boone was a key figure in the radical student movement.

After serving in the US Army in the Italian Campaign during World War II, Boone returned home and worked as a key organizer of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) in the New England area.

"He even ran as a candidate in Vermont on the CPUSA ticket, though I forget for what office," Audrey recalled.

With McCarthyism engulfing the United States in the early '50s, Boone was forced to go underground. For four years, he would have only irregular contacts with his family.

Nevertheless, Peggy, also a CPUSA member, had a full time job, so that "although we were poor, we always had something to eat," says Audrey.

It was a trying time for the family.

The Catholic Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, where the Schirmers resided for a while, "told the schoolchildren not to play with the children of the communists," recalls his other daughter, Abbie. "But they did, anyway."

Abbie also remembers when the Boston police came to confiscate the books that the family owned. In the attic after the CPUSA bookstore in the city was forced to close down.

"My brother Joseph spit at the police from our second floor porch when they left with the books," she says.

All radicals

Boone was arrested in 1954 under the repressive Smith Act but was released after spending two weeks in jail.

CAMBRIDGE, Boone and wife Peggy: They opened their home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Filipino freedom fighters, including Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

McCarthyism was roaring in the late '50s, but another crisis hit the ranks of the CPUSA when the horrors of the Stalin period were revealed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union after the death of the dictator.

Boone gradually disengaged from the CPUSA, but, says Audrey, "he never became bitter about his years with the party like many others did. For him and Mom, you just kept going, you just had to keep on trying, plug."

Abbie adds: "He and Mom had a great influence on us children. We were a close family. We all became radicals, though we were doing different things. And I guess it helped that we went to a summer camp where we met other kids of parents who were also subjected to McCarthyite persecution."

High point

Probably the high point of Boone's political life occurred in 1985, when the Philippine Senate voted to end the tenure of 18 bases in the country—a goal he had campaigned hard for.

The next year saw him honored by the Philippine Senate, along with Senators Jovito Salonga and Wigberto Tañada, for their influence on that historic vote.

But Boone was disappointed with the major foreign policy moves of the new democratic government following the withdrawal of the bases.

The 1998 US-RP Visiting Forces Agreement signed by the Estrada administration allowed the US government to redeploy a large military presence in the country to the guise of engaging in military exercises.

Another blow was the Arroyo administration's endorsement of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and its participation in the so-called "Coalition of the Willing."

As he entered his twilight years, Boone the historian moved to ensure that future scholars would have access to his vast number of books and research material.

He donated part of his private collection of 4,000 books and manuscripts to the University of the Philippines' Third World Studies Center, though, say Joseph recalls, "he regretted when the center wanted to name the collection after him, saying it should be named after the Filipino born ipothesist Mabini."

Other parts of the collection went to the De La Salle University in the Philippines and two US universities.

True patriot

But until the end Boone remained a political activist.

The letter recommending him for the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for Asian American Studies, which he received in March 2004, noted: "Even almost 90 years old, frail and having survived a hip replacement operation and two recent bouts of pneumonia, Boone continues to speak out against war and write about the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"Adamantly opposed to US militarist policies throughout the world, Boone seems in a recent article, 'The present Bush administration represents the most extremist, most militarist and most imperialist in history America's economic capacity gives it influence that is nearly global in evidence. Granting that it is an unparalleled military establishment of global reach and frightful nuclear potential. Under normal circumstances, Washington carries on its hegemonic policy ... It is attempting to consolidate its military domination ... on a crippling route for US military intervention in Asia and the Middle East.'

"Spoken like a true American patriot."

A few months after Boone received this honor, Peggy passed away on Aug. 8, 2005.

Boone died in his sleep last April 23, surrounded by their children.

The author is a professor of sociology at the University of the Philippines and currently a visiting professor of sociology at the University of California at Irvine.

'We work from the shadows'

From page A1

the group had pushed so that its anti-land banker communities could assemble and plan ways to make their Traditional Tribal Origins Ethnic Education Schools (TTOES) fully work for some 3,000 children and hundreds more adult learners.

To do this, the cash, goods and services solicited in, enabling first Aeta law graduate Myda Ecome, Aeta teacher Gonda Pesqueda, Damagui volunteer worker Adler Torres, tribal chief Ben Agustin and others and our community leaders to gather for workshops on April 26-30 at the Social Action Center of Pampanga.

The participants identified the limitations that hinder their development and learned to develop options' work taught techniques on how to sustain the TOES the tribes built in their villages.

Hearing these words can produce, does not actions, and articulate hopes that every Aeta or Dumagat child in their villages will get an education and help their peoples overcome ignorance and poverty indicated their seriousness to attain these goals and protect their ethnic identity, Wallum said.

Leaders found the last undertaking difficult to organize. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples and the Department of Education's had no funds for it., NCIP regional director Salong Sinagpal said.

Purpose-stone

Wallum's 11 years of working with the Aeta and other Indigenous Peoples (IPs) began with a purpose-stone.

She was then a volunteer with the Enlist in Development's Philippine program, the Information Volunteer Action (INA).

When Mount Pinatubo erupted in June 1991, a fellow volunteer, Dr. Cid Sipayan, walked into the office all covered in ash. The doctor charged Wallum's hand and placed a pumice stone that was still warm.

Sometime, you've got to do something for these people. You've got to find something for them to do," was what she remembered of that encounter.

"I divided [in] my single pumice [involving] bags and gathering pumice," she said of the first special marketing work under the INA.

Not only did the stone earn money for the gatherers and the bag makers in what were then called "tent cities."

The tentative printing of Pinatubo motifs, as well as the collecting of stones, helped "because it was a therapy to work with your hands," Wallum said.

It was a Filipino, Juliet Bjelos, who kept the project going on the ground.

When the Aeta people in Barangay Apalit in Magalang town said they needed seeds and tools to resume farming, the extra money of the bag project went to them.

Lanelle Abueva Fernando joined the pool of volunteers and initiated the project that used rail, classic ash to glaze pottery.

The funds bought the condensed soil tests, project supplied more farming equipment and funded training sessions on organic farming.

The INA, Wallum said, closed its program in Pampanga but refused her to continue the work. What was how the PINCP was formed in 1994. It financed the enterprises of special needs groups in the country helping to produce designing, quality control and marketing.

Volunteers came to Wallum's house every Sunday to pack the goods.

Their "best marketing places" are Silsilia Arts and Artifacts, Lakbay Sin Clark, Dusun's Handicrafts and Handicraft Continental Lobby Shop.

Emergency

The PINCP's involvement in education began with an emergency in 1995 when government funds for Aeta schools ran out.

As of September last year, at least 28 Aeta, Ivut Dumagat, are studying and one Ifugao finished college.

Come, the first new law graduate, moved her Zambales village to the Quezon before moving on to the Clark Development Corp. as a legal analyst.

Ali Come, Gilbert Cuyo, Jefferson Gerson and the rest from help as "activators" (or volunteers) reached in adult literacy classes.

The group is still sending to college at least 20 students from its Pampanga.

The TOES started in 2000 when the students of Alex Buckley with of an Australian ambassador, raised funds for her dorm needs in the Philippines on United Increase Day.

When Buckley came to Wallum to ask how to spend the money of students at the Australian College in Canberra, the NCIP's Rose Bitayong jumped in and said, "Schools!"

The donation went to build the first TOES in Orion, Bataan.

IP-sensitive schools

"The Aeta enjoy learning. Many times are reluctant to go to school then started taking the NCIP and the PINCP for help in educating their children. They pointed out that children tend to schools within their own distance so that "no walk so the that they were too tired to study," Wallum said.

"They recounted how their school children were marked for their poverty and physical appearance. Aeta leaders also observed how their children were taught to read from books, textbooks and knowledge," she said.

"The only subjects was obviously to have IP-sensitive schools," Wallum said.

Today, there are eight TOES in Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Quezon, 12 in Tarlac, and six in Zambales. Six assistant TOES, or those built from sources outside the PINCP's benefactors and foundations, are in Tarlac, Nueva Ecija and Bataan.

These buildings have one, two or three rooms made mostly of local materials or concrete, or a combination of both. These cost from a low of P50,000 to P200,000 or more.

On nights and weekends, the structures are used for training sessions for parents of pupils.

The good thing about the TOES, Wallum said, was that they served participation.

In communities, residents pitch in their labor. The natural wealth of the area is also tapped to raise cost time, with contributed church or grass.

The NCIP and English Agency the workers. Students take turns cleaning, while parents assist teachers. Communities with TOES get donations of material or fruit seedlings.

Getting back at what she and the PINCP have done, Wallum stated almost sat having their most real place.

"We never being guided by needs we hear from the people themselves, and like the pumice project, there was no plan in my head. It continues like that," she said.

Rarely seen

"We are rarely seen in the communities. It is the NCIP that coordinates and trains the people. If we are always appearing there, it is disruptive to the culture," she said.

"I don't believe in too many outsiders coming into a community, appearing to be big and 'I know better than you,'" Wallum said.

Her happiness comes from letters from people that her group had helped.

"What they're essentially saying is how it opened the world to them or opened a new door. Or, though they want to conserve their culture, they can learn some knowledge so that they can survive better in the new world," she said.

UN: RP will remain poor unless...

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION Fund (UNFPA) said yesterday that the Philippines will remain an impoverished nation unless it found a more effective way to curb the rapid growth of its population. Moreover, the government was liable to charges of violating human rights if it did not provide the public access to all types of family planning methods.

Dr. Zalmiki Hoque, the UNFPA representative in the Philippines, sounded the warnings at a news conference during the 1st International Conference on Reproductive Health Management.

"We need to address reproductive health issues squarely to achieve our medium-term development goals," Hoque said, citing the "demographic bonus" achieved by Brazil and some countries in Asia that managed their population growth in the 1980s.

In the Philippines, he said, a "host of disparities" in the agriculture and health sectors as well as in the education sector could belong to slow economic development.

"We need to address them. Until population should be the No. 1 priority," he said.

Senator Gen. Rodolfo Aguinaldo Gazmin, speaking at the same news conference, urged local governments to take the lead.

"The national government is fully-talking," she said. "It's about time the local government officials do it, it's much better because we know the needs of our constituents. We know how to strategize."

With respect to family planning methods, Hoque said he has warned senior officials "that the government could be charged with violating human rights if they focused only on a particular method."

He was referring to natural family planning, reportedly the approach preferred by the Arroyo administration in deference to the Roman Catholic Church.

He said other methods should be made available to provide the public an informed choice.

Purificacion Quisumbing, chair of the Commission on Human Rights, said that "reproductive health is a human rights if they focused only on a particular method."

Hoque said civil society groups could actually file cases against the government for not making available all family planning methods and Quisumbing pointed out such cases have been brought against governments in Africa.

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RP now 2nd most dangerous for labor unions

By Marlon Ramos,
Mid Southern Luzon Bureau
and Jerome Aning in Manila

CALAMBA CITY—THE PHILIPPINES IS SEEN becoming the most dangerous place for labor unionists after Colombia, a US-based labor rights advocacy group said Tuesday as members of a 12-nation International Labor Solidarity Mission listened to in various provinces to investigate killings, abductions and other attacks on labor leaders and supporters.

Brian Campbell, an official of the International Labor Rights Fund, said his group and the others were alarmed over the attacks on trade union leaders in the country, some of whom worked in factories owned by multinational corporations from the United States and Europe.

ILRF is a group of lawyers based in Washington, D.C., which helps families of murdered union leaders file criminal cases against corporations suspected of complicity in the killings.

Spate of killings

The spate of labor killings in the Philippines now matches the notoriety of Colombia, which is the most dangerous country for labor unions, Campbell told the business chiefly after he arrived here as part of a group that is looking into recent attacks on labor leaders in the Southern Tagalog region.

"The Philippines is becoming one of the worst countries (for *Tee* (union)). What is most disturbing is that it takes fear and fear to persecute the killings," he said.

Last week, Gerry Ortenlad, president of a union in a semiconductor firm in Cavite, was critically wounded in a shooting involving an intelligence operative in Imus, Cavite. Militant groups said that, contrary to what the police had earlier reported, it was Ortenlad who was ambushed.

Campbell said the other members of the solidarity mission hope to interview premiers on the foreign governments to see steadily on the murders of labor leaders.

Campbell said the ILRF was currently involved in at least 12 cases where it represents workers or a human plaintiffs in Guatemala and a German-owned coal company in Colombia.

Dark side of globalization

Campbell said in some countries he had visited, corporations with mother companies in the US and Europe were suspected to have been involved in ordering the slayings of union leaders.

"The people in the US don't have a full understanding of how it is like to be a worker in the Philippines," he said. "It is important that they know what the companies, which they believe are good citizens, are doing here. They should understand that there is a dark side to this globalization and capitalism."

Among the countries and representatives on the solidarity mission are the United States, Belgium, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The mission was organized by the local Center for Trade Union and Human Rights, the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research, and the Alliance of Concerned Teachers.

Some of the other teams have already arrived in Bulacan, Subic and Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), while others were on their way to Compostela Valley and the island of Negros, according to mission spokesperson Elena Arago.

"They will talk to the victims and survivors of politically related incidents of violence including those who experienced harassment, abduction and torture because of their trade union and political activities in their factories and communities," added Arago, who is also executive director of the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights.

Unmasking the killers

The delegates will visit the families of those who were killed and gather first-hand information on the circumstances around the killings.

"We aim to unmask the perpetrators of these heinous crimes which killed more than 60 unionists, labor leaders and advocates since 2001," Arago said.

Arago said the success of the mission would depend on the cooperation of the authorities.

"We expect that the team from local militants and public forum [to] are also determined to push through with the work," she told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

Aside from the killings, disappearances and abductions, the mission members will also document reports and violations of privacy and intrusion into the workers homes and families.

The mission is expected to present its report in Manila on May 7. Mission members and local labor rights advocates are to meet with the Commission on Human Rights the following day, Arago said.

In Tarlac, the killings to be investigated are those of Ricardo Ramos, former president of the General Assembly of Tarlac Labor Unions; Tirso Cruz, a leader of the United Luisita Workers' Union; Bayan Muna-Tarlac secretary general Florante Collantes; and Tarlac City councilor Abelardo Lubrin.

Christmas Day torture

In Bulacan, the mission will investigate the murders of Federico de Leon, provincial chair of the Anakpawis Party; Rogelio Concepcion, union president of Solid Development Corp.; and Francisco Bernas, who was illegally detained, interrogated and tortured on Christmas day last year.

In Calabarzon, the delegates will focus on the killings of Nestle Philippines union president Oscalado Ramirez, Alliance of Concerned Teachers national council member Napoleon Bernardino and Bonds Workers' Union president Ramera Legaspi.

In Negros and southern Mindanao, the mission will study the plight of sugar and banana plantation workers, respectively. They will also look into the murders of at least four leaders of the National Federation of Sugar Workers, a KMU affiliate in the sugar industry.

VICTIM. Pedro Cristobal holds out a picture of his son Gerry, a labor leader who was shot allegedly by the military in Cavite on April 28.

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RP gets high rating from Sokor tourists

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES OBTAINED A 95 percent satisfaction rating in a recent survey conducted among South Korean tourists, indicating that the country's emergence as the Koreans' most favored travel destination.

The first quarter survey conducted by the Korea Travel Times on a country-by-country basis showed 36 percent of PNT passengers were "very much satisfied" with their Philippine experience, and 59 percent "fairly satisfied."

The Koreans' favorite Philippine destinations are Boracay, which got 52 percent, followed by Cebu, 29 percent; and Manila, 26 percent.

As to the most enticing feature of the Philippines, natural magnificence topped the Korean survey with 35 percent, followed by reasonable hotel expenses with 21 percent, and tourist spots with 16 percent.

Korea Times, founded in 1950, is an English-language daily in South Korea with a daily circulation of about a million.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano, in a statement, welcomed the results of the survey, saying it explained the continued influx of Korean tourists to the Philippines.

Half a million Koreans traveled to the Philippines last year, making South Korea the country's second-largest source of foreign tourists, after the United States.

In January and February this year, 100,000 Koreans arrived, overtaking Americans, who numbered only 97,000. The Korean tourists accounted for nearly a third of 440,000 foreign arrivals.

Do the numbers of the trips, 36 percent of those surveyed visited family tour, and 17 percent honeymoon. Weekend travel, backpacking, and business trip accounted for 11 to 13 percent each.

"The indicator that the Philippines now looms as a honeymoon destination for Korean newlyweds 'echo' used to join Phuket, Thailand and Bali, in Jeonsin for 'first journey,'" Durano said.

Even those who have not yet gone to the Philippines are interested in going.

Of the 5,441 respondents who have not yet been to the Philippines, 3,280 or 60 percent expressed willingness to visit the archipelago in two years. Asked how willing they were to visit the Philippines, 47 percent said "very much" and 43 percent "fairly much."

ATS

NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS
ABOITIZ TRANSPORT SYSTEM (ATSI)

WE WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST CURRENT STOCKHOLDERS OF THE ABOITIZ TRANSPORT SYSTEM (ATSI) TO UPDATE THEIR RECORDS WITH THE STOCK TRANSFER AGENT, SECURITIES TRANSFER SERVICES, INC. (STSI), FOR PROPER DOCUMENTATION AND ENSURE THAT STOCKHOLDERS WOULD RECEIVE ALL COMMUNICATION FROM ATS.

STOCKHOLDERS ARE ADVISED TO UPDATE THEIR RECORDS IN PERSON, BRING TWO (2) VALID IDENTIFICATION CARDS (IDs) WITH SIGNATURES, AND PHOTOCOPIES OF THE IDs; AND PRESENT THEIR TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (TIN) TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

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Meralco Avenue corner Exchange Road, Pasig City
Tel. No. 631-8004 to 30

Signed
HELEN D. TIU
Corporate Secretary

ATS

ABOITIZ TRANSPORT SYSTEM (ATSI) CORPORATION
(formerly Metrolec Holdings, Inc.)
NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS
PLACE: Gaisano G & C Function Rooms, Makati Shangri-La, Ayala Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City
DATE: May 25, 2006
TIME: 2:00 P.M.

Dear Stockholders:
You are cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of Aboitiz Transport System (ATSI) Corporation (the "Company"), formerly Metrolec Holdings & Realty, Inc., which will be held on May 25, 2006 at Gaisano G & C Function Rooms, Makati Shangri-La Ayala Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City at 2:00 PM. The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Certification of Notice
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum
4. Approval of Minutes of the Stockholders' Meeting held on June 17, 2005
5. Annual Report for the year ended December 31, 2005
6. Election of the Board of Directors
7. Appointment of External Auditor
8. Additional amendment to Secondary Purpose, Inc.
9. Amendment of Article 7 of the Articles of Incorporation to add a convertibility feature to the redeemable preferred shares so as to allow holders of redeemable preferred shares, at their option, to convert every redeemable preferred share into ten (10) common shares of the Company, which conversion must be exercised on or before December 31, 2006 or within 120 days from the approval by the Securities and Exchange Commission of such amendment, whichever occurs earlier;
10. Approval and Ratification of all acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management for the period covering 11 May 2005 to 27 April 2006;
11. Such Other Matters as may properly come before it
12. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record in the books of the Company at the close of business on April 24, 2006 will be entitled to vote at said stockholders' meeting.

Manila, Philippines, April 26, 2006.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
By:
HELEN D. TIU
Corporate Secretary

Brokers say 'boycott' was act of protest, not sabotage

By Lala B. Salaverria

CUSTOMS BROKERS DID NOT FILE import entries at Manila's two seaport terminals last Tuesday simply to highlight their grievances against the government and not to sabotage the Bureau of Customs' collections of import duties, a spokesman for the brokers said yesterday.

Ramon Calzadilla of the Southern Alliance Petroleum in Advance (SPA) said the group's action was meant to inform Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales that the brokers were protesting his controversial task force's seizure of shipments that had already been released by the bureau.

Import entries are the basis for the collection of taxes and duties on imports.

"We just wanted to let him know about our problems; that's only our intention," Calzadilla said in a telephone interview. "I don't think it will affect the monthly collection, but on the day of the non-filing, the record will probably show that the collection was lower than usual."

Calzadilla had earlier estimated that the Port of Manila at the South Harbor and the Manila International Container Port at the South Harbor could have lost about P30 million each as a result of the brokers' action.

He said some of his association's members had wanted the non-filing of import entries to last for more than a day, but the body decided that one day was enough.

The CIIS, which is based at the Port of Manila at the South Harbor, was joined in the protest by the Mayon Agad Samahan ng mga Brokerage at Personnel, the association of brokers operating at the Manila International Container Port in the North Harbor.

Morales, in meeting with both groups during the protest, explained that some of the shipments had to be seized even after they had been cleared because the authorities discovered that the goods had either been misdeclared or undervalued and, therefore, were not charged the proper taxes.

"All these are being done to collect the proper taxes and give the government its due," Morales told the brokers.

The Bureau of Customs is related to collect P541.4 billion in 2006. It has exceeded its monthly collection target for the past four months.

Robbins told the business the brokers were pleased that Morales met with them and gave them a chance to present their problems, even though not all of their requests were granted.

"We're happy enough that the Commissioner talked with us and we were able to present our side. We want to cooperate with him. We just want what's good for everyone," he said.

The brokers requested that the apprehended shipments be brought to the Port of Manila instead of at the Harbor Center, which supposedly lacks facilities. Morales said he would study the request.

No environment permit issued to La Mesa housing

By Blandie S. Rivera

THE PLANNED 800-unit housing project for government employees inside the La Mesa watershed does not have the environmental compliance certificate required by the government, specifically under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The old National Waterworks and Sewerage Administration (Nawasa) uses the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, but not agriculture as EIC office with the Environment Management Bureau in the Laguna Lake Development Authority.

"There's no pending application in our EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) unit ... We can bar (action) on about it, not on the Legal group," Lt. Col. general manager Carmelo Nuevo III said in a phone interview yesterday.

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Use accounting to keep score of your business. More importantly understand what the numbers mean.

May 24 Wed & 26 Fri 9:30-12:30pm
Chito Tandoco
Simulation Your Operations: Managing Your Inputs
Know & understand materials management and inventory, operations design & economic order quantity.

May 17 Wed & 19 Fri 1:30-5pm
Dr. Darwin Yu
Achieving Your Financial Targets: Managerial Accounting
Equip yourself with the analytical tools to make operational decisions to the bottom line.

May 24 Wed & 26 Fri 1:30-5pm
Chito Tandoco
Managing Your Logistics
Understand scheduling, routing selection and unit load handling.

May 18 Thursday 9am-5pm
Rene Santiago
Personal Touch: Effective Human Resource Management for SMEs
Improve your ability to manage your human resource effectively and feel its effect on the bottomline!

May 29 Monday 9am-5pm
Ms. Venerva A. Sison
Cutting a Deal: Financing and Funding Sources for Your Business
Use financial mechanisms to raise capital for your growing company.

FAMILY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

May 31 Wednesday 9am-5pm
Ralph Guerrero & CCA Team
Succession Management
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June 1 Thursday 9am-5pm
Ricky Mercado & Team
Strategic Planning and Professionalizing the Business
Learn about strategies for professionalizing family businesses.

June 2 Friday 9am-5pm
Ricky Mercado & Team
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

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Insult and defiance

SEN. JUAN PONCE ENRILE IS QUITE WELL-KNOWN to have a temper that occasionally finds expression in superlativeversey language. But never have his angry outbursts been more justified as when he raged and ranted against the failure of two Cabinet members and the incumbent revenue commissioner to testify before a Senate committee hearing on several economic measures earlier this week.

EDITORIALS The Senate committee on ways and means, headed by Sen. Ralph Recto, had earlier invited Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Trade Secretary Peter Favila, Internal Revenue Commissioner Jose Buñag and Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales to attend the committee hearing scheduled for Tuesday. The hearing was called to discuss three pending bills: one seeking the reduction of the individual income tax rates; another one rationalizing fiscal incentives; and the third proposing measures to curb smuggling. Only Morales honored the invitation. But Teves, Favila and Buñag didn't show up at all, and didn't even bother to send any explanation. Instead, they sent their underlings, prompting Enrile to ask whether these heads of offices still gave any importance to the hearings of Congress.

Enrile contended the administration's key economic managers thus that they were being asked to explain how they could solve some of the country's economic problems and that they were being asked to do so by the people's elected representatives. "And if you don't want to do it, the hell with you!" he thundered.

Maladministration sought to justify the snub of the Senate by doing what it seems to be doing frequently these days: lying through its teeth. Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said, "We are not aware of the hearing, and neither did the officials ask for the President's consent to attend."

Maybe Defensor should start wearing a brace on his nose instead of on his wrist before it becomes longer than Pinocchio's. On the day the trade and finance officials made themselves scarce, the newspapers reported they were expected at the Senate hearing.

If Defensor has not made it a habit to read newspapers yet, he really should. Because if he did, he would have known that Cabinet members do not need the President's clearance to testify in hearings called by Congress in aid of legislation. That was what the Supreme Court said in its recent decision voiding parts of Executive Order 464, which sought precisely to keep Congress from inquiring into anything that the executive branch was doing.

Thus, by refusing the Senate investigation, these officials did not only show disrespect to the Senate, as Enrile put it; they also defied the Supreme Court and committed something illegal. And no one, not even Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, should tell them that it's all right to continue doing what the Court has already deemed to be illegal, just because the decision (which the Court reached unanimously) has yet to become final and executory.

Maximum tolerance

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SHAMELESS, BOORISH minorities and inept, idiotic policemen converge in one place? Chaos and a traffic jam extending some five kilometers.

Which was exactly what happened late in the afternoon of Labor Day on the highway from Dasmariñas to Bacoor leading to Barangay Sta. Cruz in Lubao, Pampanga. There was no accident or road repair to slow down traffic, and, of course, no policeman to direct it. What there was in abundance were thoughtless drivers who believed it was their God-given right to get ahead of everybody else. So they occupied the right shoulder, and the opposite lane, and the opposite shoulder as well, clogging the highway at certain points.

But Monday motorists just saw one of those days apparently. The same thing happened Saturday morning, going the opposite way. What made Monday's experience the more remarkable was the attitude of four police officers (three males and one female) at a checkpoint in Sta. Cruz. None of them moved to apprehend any of the offending drivers, even as they cut into the right lane from the opposite side right in front of them. And when one exasperated motorist demanded to know why they were not citing anyone for violating traffic, guess what one policeman sermoned in reply? "Go, and drive them yourself!"

In the President's hometown, they must have different traffic rules. Or they have policemen who believe it is the citizen's duty to enforce laws—not theirs.

Tales of two cities

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

VISITORS TO OUR CITIES ARE often appalled by the garbage, traffic gridlock, water shortages and urban blight. That's bad. The more discerning are stunned by lavish parties tall an "urban quality." That's worse.

Now city, however small, is in fact divided in to two: one like that of the poets, the other of the rich," Thucydides (460 to 400 before Christ).

Mounting population and economic change have long dispersed these fragmented urban clusters beyond their antiquated borders. They've spilled over into turbulent "edge cities."

Yet, many officials act as if tomorrow's cities will simply be more of the present. We know in our bones, this situation won't carry us very far. Poverty, population and expectations, stoked by information revolution, are "exploding" Plato's fragmented cities.

Today, the mayors of 65 cities are debating the Asian Institute of Management's Philippine Cities Competitiveness Ranking Project.

Unwise, Las Vegas, Makati, Marikina and Mandaluyong topped the metro category. Why Cebu didn't measure up flummoxed Mayor "Tomas Osmeña."

Bacolod and Iloilo were among mid-size city topnotchers. Naga made it again, in the small city category, with Tagbilaran and Tagum, among others.

Some upset mayors are swallowing in humble revisers. Those signed their Rio Tuba charter—"to promote healthy competition among Philippine cities"—as being purely achieved.

Many city officials, however, think small and old. Now they must think different and new, if their cities are to break out of stagnation.

Will Cebu become the "leading city" alone? In 1995, there were 10 cities. Today, are here 11? Subic and Naga, in Cebu provinces, want in join the club. So do scholars others.

The tougher choice, however, lie ahead: how to nurture sustained private and progress to make cities engines of economic growth, and of the nation. Naga offers a model for all.

The formula for success is not new. But it is, as G.K. Chesterton said, rarely tried. "Success is the leadership value of the local government officials," AIM says. Next are "a strong support system, offered by business alliances and responsive civil society."

The simplest definition of good governance still remains the best: "the way those with power, or wisely use that power." And Princeton University's Robert Putnam identifies "four pillars" of this nugget of wisdom, namely:

1. Transparency: if there consistent access to information, clearly understandable and timely? This is critical with budgets and conflicts of interest issues.

Naga City publishes and posts on the Internet its budget, data on awarded bids, etc. The minimal wants and gruff, Cebu City bookkeeper on a similar plan, which would have made Governor Osmeña's secretary threatened "you have open to public scrutiny."

Lack of clarity is partly due to flabby internal controls (now funded in local governments, says the AIM) or its deconstruction nearly This is how cities and provinces, down to barangays, DP 1,689 local governance units audited, only 258 proved squeaky clean. City Halls often beg down in scrimping and pronouncement scandals.

2. Accountability: are officials held to account? Or can they get away unpunished, as, indeed, for other city derelictions?

Mayors who offer time-bound performance targets are the exception. Most of them mouth motherhood rhetoric. A constructive opposition is essential in pinning down responsibility. It's true that it always moving on to the next headache. Or worse, it offers no opposition at all.

3. Predictability: law laws and rules fair, clear, known in advance and uniformly enforced.

Mayor Osmeña decided to funnel local taxes away from Lahug—where the multi-awarded barangay leader Mary Ann de los Santos presides—to other barangays where his partisans rule. The only predictability is the unpredictability of political whim.

4. Participation: The growth of civil society and information media is reshaping citizen participation, especially in oversight functions.

In Alma, a community group helped "audit" public works projects. It earned the respect of the governments and people such that it was included in the bids and awards committee. But it also triggered an assassination. "Such examples are celebrated because they serve to inspire willingness to take risks in a political environment that to promotes abuse civil and political violence," AIM notes.

In the future, the World Bank says, cities will need to turn away from dividers. This century models where the City Hall provides most infrastructure and services that are invariably shoddy and inadequate.

"Cities around the world are divided into those cities can provide for their citizens needs and those who cannot ... City Halls often cater to one part of a city and, at best, adopt a posture of benign neglect toward the other. (These) make the Dickensian cities deepen."

Shoddy city governance, therefore, wins the "reward" of calls "to promote service providers"? the bank asks. Its alternative role should be that of an "enabler." City Hall would instead rely increasingly on the private sector to deliver basic services.

Successful partnership-based models are "described as 'the quiet revolution' in local governance," the bank observes. And the AIM process seek to help mayors grasp their way to these new models.

"In the present fire not only the nightmare of what the city will become if current trends continue." Anne Lamott writes in "The Iron Lake." Her book also contains "dreams of what the city could be."

• • •

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Breeding

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

AS SMITH-MILLMAN END A TROUBLED preaching letter last Tuesday in our Letters section. She said that she disagreed with me, she did not think what Theresa Pangilinan did was cause for praise, she thought it was cause for shame.

"I believe that Pangilinan graduated without learning basic good manners and right conduct. It's not wrong to express one's feelings. But there's a place for everything. Panganihan could have used her place in some other place but not during a graduation ceremony. ... At just seven she got through college but not up still uneducated ... Attitude is very important. The aim of all those is called breeding. This you cannot get from any school."

Before anything else, I'm glad that Medina, a 17-year old, has the independence of mind to express her own thoughts on the matter. I'm glad that Medina, a youth who I take it is either a college freshman or is about to become one, has a capacity for introspection and inspiration, even though she can't distinguish from the other. There's hope for this country yet.

But I beg to disagree with her position. First off, surely all her cynicism apply more to the guest speaker in the graduation than to the student who graduated. But can we substitute "GMA" for "Pangilinan" in some parts of Medina's letter and see if that lets us.

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Bull. Bunk. Crud. Sez Theresa Pangilinan.

"GMA could learn and her place in some other place but not during a graduation ceremony," DBN has no lack of media outlets. Channel 4 being chief of them, a thing that as in Marcos' time we are paying for to the tune and much pleats in government and in media to give the people the impression that it is functional like they itself not speak the truth, they need only speak English. Did she have to inflict herself on a graduation ceremony, too? Is television not blessed occasion, a time for graduates to listen with clarity thoughts and ideals. The guest speakers you get there are living examples you want the youth to emulate. GMA is the living example you want the youth to emulate?

I agree, getting through college doesn't not unduly make you educated or enlightened, and certainly not PLUS. It is sometimes doesn't. It usually make you civil or well-bred. That is not a counsel but addressed to the bullies, that is a counsel best addressed to the bullied.

But is Pangilinan equally guilty of rude, uncivil or reprehensible behavior? There, too, I would disagree. I go back to the story of the emperor and his new clothes. Teachers a world where people are compelled, under pain of losing bonds, to believe that a naked Emperor is wearing clothes of invisible weave, you need to be a boy who will shout insolently with voice of innocence, "Why, the emperor is bare. he!" to rouse everyone from their delusion.

We've become that world. We are not only learning to accept baseness and shamelessness as necessary, we are learning to accept them as exemplary. We are not just allowing ourselves to be coerced into silence in the face of impiety, we are allowing ourselves to believe being silent is the only way to "move on." You have GMA no longer ashamed of what she did during the last election—or well before it when she lied to the people about not running now to spare them severe mailing disturbances ... in order to run in 2010, you're parodic before the kids as mentor and role model, then the kids have every right to fight back. Then the kids have every right to tell those elders who are being stupid while trying to appear wise: "You blind fools, can't you see the emperor is naked cutting naked?"

In normal circumstances, Pangilinan's behavior would have been come for dissing you in these science-driven times, it is come for elsewhere. "Time and place for everything." Agreed. But in a time and place where witnessing or to wrongdoing are being prevented from witnessing in the bravest and persistent to that some wrongdoing are being prevented from witnessing in the streets, in a time and place where the elders are being told that they may say their pieces only to the close and place—and manners ... a fake president designates, what else is there but to rebel? What else is there but to say that, in systems, the time and place and way to speak to truth time and even anniversary may?

Breeding to me, for being polite in the face of injustice is not breeding, it is supinating. Being respectful in the face of oppression is not breeding, it is genuflecting. I will rather Pangilinan's irreverence anytime to that kind of breeding. That insolence shows real breeding, the kind that has to do with discernment and courage, not the kind that has to do with manners and etiquette. The first breeds character, the second breeds only snobbery. Breeding in the end is not about learning how to handle the right spoon and the right fork at the right time, it is about learning how to do the right thing at the right time. Breeding isn't shown by social graces in cocktail parties, it is shown by grace under fire.

Bull. Bunk Cred Sez Theresa Pangilinan.

The dilemma of curiosity and its use

ALBERT EINSTEIN ONCE SAID, "I HAVE NO special gift...but I am passionately curious." Certainly, Einstein was being tremendously modest on that, just as curiosity may indeed be a powerful driving force in scientific discovery. Indeed, along with talent and interest, as well as motivational factors of school quasi-native abilities, curiosity is a necessary measurement of any successful scientist.

Curiosity betrays emotional passion. It is a drive that naturally propels any intelligent being to delve into the depths of and for wherein—since our senses are somewhat—are to be appreciated only in a limited sense. We all sense that the world around us, equipped with the psychological drive to explore the world and to expand the various that we started. It is the scientific curiosity that is well developed in the psychological psychology beats the ride, "The Scientist in the Crib," a work that traces the parallels between small children's behavior and the processes and research strategies that are usual in science.

But the urge for knowledge that drives intense curiosity is natural genetic factor that is not innate nor learned. Parents can tell many a tale about how, with the beginning of school, their children's playful approach suddenly changes, as they must now focus on topics dictated by the curriculum. Likewise, however desirable in ability to produce the unexpected and unforeseeable, the scientific curiosity claims that it is not necessarily to society.

Curiosity is insatiable and, in research, it is to curiosity tied to the unforeseeability of results. Research is an endless process, with a destination that no one can predict precisely. The more that unexpected results, brought forth by research in the laboratory, are a precondition for further investigation, the more precious there is to be the production of knowledge under science, so-called research in specific directions, and so-some scientific curiosity. But curiosity must rein be limited nor severely test science's ability to produce new knowledge for fear.

This dilemma is at the center of many policy debates surrounding scientific research. To be sure, not everything that arouses scientific curiosity is controversial; in fact, most scientific research is not. Still, the dilemma is obvious in parts-ing fields like biomedicine, nanotechnology, and neurosciences. Research in these areas sometimes appears to whip society's nature on religious grounds as in the case of stem cell research; or raising ethical fear, for example, the possibility of creating human identity.

Curiosity implies a certain unintentionality, a certain necessary course. That is precisely what makes it a paradox. It is aimed and follows its own course. This is why society's nature on curiosity is a curious ways. Private investment in research drives curiosity as it parts where new scientific breakthroughs promise high economic potential. Politicians expect research or function as a means of economic growth. Ethics commissions want to establish limits on research, even if those require frequent re-negotiation. The demand for more bureaucratic logic. Finally, also seeks to influence research priorities.

Those considerations must be borne in all of have to support basic research. In Europe, the establishment of the European Research Council (ERC) is running a decisive phase, with actual implications concerning the role we are prepared to invest in scientific curiosity. For the first time, support for basic research is being made possible on the EU level. Individual teams are to enter a pan-European competition to determine the best of the best, opening a free space for scientific curiosity and enabling the unforeseeable innovation that are characteristic of cutting-edge research.

The dilemma—and it is a decisive one—is that today we cherish the passionate curiosity of an gifted thinkers. But we still want to control the unforeseeable consequences to which curiosity leads. The dilemma that to overcome by allowing curiosity to an preserved and supported, while trying to organize those of us from the—will benefit society. We may accomplish this must be continuously input must in the public sphere. It must do the considerations will remain, and deserve for the deliberations that characterize modern societies' nature toward science.

Project Synthesis

Helga Nowotny is author of "Eigensinnige Skepsis: Innovation in einer fragilen Zukunft" (Eccentric Curiosity: Innovation in an Uncertain Future) and vice-chair of the ERC Scientific Council.

Feedback on 'Everest'

HOME SECRETARY MICHAEL HOWARD'S ANNOUNCEMENT, "Standing Everest," which was partly aimed the efforts to conquer the taller peak by a team and an individual supported respectively by TV network giants MBS-CBS and MBA-7. The two stations—one adventurer's Himalayan spirit and adventure—I had expressed my concern about the "race," what with two competing networks doing a seeming coverage of their respective climbers. And I already see my concerns coming to pass in the coming weeks.

From Mark H. Ramirez, vice president of MBS-CBS's Communications, Corporate Affairs and Public Relations: "We are writing in response to Ramon Tulfo's column 'Standing Everest' published (April 22). Please be informed that MBS-CBS's outside intent to support the first Philippine Mt. Everest expedition was arranged nearly two years ago with The Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines headed by Commodore Jaime Bautista and Antonio Valdez. The network has pledged, among others, a media campaign drive that will promote the team.

"The decision was made based on new sound, economic—that it was a legitimate news story and, as it is, what is the with the network's common sense to the coverage of momentous sporting events involving Filipino athletes.

"There was never any consideration of competition since owing with anybody. We had no knowledge that there would be a second climbing expedition sponsored by a similar organization. This move is not about climbing but about MBS-CBS's intensive service to millions of Filipino viewers here and abroad without a care to a lifetime adventure of their fellowmen.

"MBS-CBS supports the Filipino's endeavor and success, including the competitor's efforts. And in the spirit of giving moral support to all Filipino athletes, we wish Mr. Rafel Ilarbeo [supported by Erich 7] well and we wish him luck, as we do all other climbers making the ascent.

"MBS-CBS has already been in the forefront of historical endeavors, being part of the Everest expedition once again illustrates the network's service to the Filipino people as a champion the cause of Philippine sports and highlights the achievements of our athletes as comparable to the best in the world.

"Thank you and may we continue supporting the Filipino team in conquering the highest peak in the world."

From Lu de Leon of California:

"I read your column on the ABS-CBN/GMA race to the Everest, and just a few days before I watched a similar documentary, 'Everest, Killer Mountain' on PBS which was about the 1996 tragedy that killed six to eight unified climbers and Sherpa guides. The movie caught in a scenic and an avalanche on their way down.

"Anyone remotely interested on this project should see this film first. They do not know what they are getting into. No amount of TV coverage can compensate for the loss of lives and suffering of survivors who end up without limbs, noses and other body parts for which we have no space. My Everest."

From Mario Ramos:

"Your article is caustic, I hope a lot of people were able to read it. From my readings on the Net, the GMA-7 representative was admonished to conquer Everest this year. The ABS-CBN 2 team is supposed to go in 1997.

"What I find sad about GMA was hearing on the morning news, they rushed their own team's schedule by one year. This is stupidity, and could be deadly.

"Another prime example of what ABS-CBN is a cream of the crop as compared to their broadcast's group. The ignoramuses' tragedy is another example—the victims had just been laid to rest when they resumed his show, allegedly to help the people, 'for which reminds me of Willie Nepomuceno on the radio' guess every time he does this show.

What's in it for you

IN THE END, EVERY POLITICAL DECISION begins with, "What's in it for me?" That is why we manage to make so little progress.

So groaning someone does not care about right or wrong—and seems discussions of right and wrong as an irritating pastime of the "leader than thou" rabble; just that one does not want to talk about pesticides with the business-oriented at the golf course, or about the environmental sustainability of a major investment, and, for the sake of argument, that is take sides—which is inevitable in everything, from sports to moral decisions, not to mention politics—is undesirable because of some mythical need for "objectivity", and, last but the least, because of pure self-interest. Sometimes enough, it becomes the truth—assuming all those things, will someone please explain how on earth Christ can change, as defined by the administration, can make life better? And for whom?

Take the issue of jobs and security: the salary lowest we must, increase the price of gas and goods, say inflation, create fewer problems on the roads, improve health care services and provide for cheaper and more efficient schooling, a more personal and responsive bureaucracy, better and more honest government, better assistance, and genuine peace and order?

How energizing the current leadership—or any leadership, for that matter, not to mention actual votes) translated by questions of legitimacy—a black cloud, potentially, improve our lives? Will it make us more or less happy and safe? Will it make us feel like old political pals? How can Chavez change help?

Tell me, will the same view at the helm for five years now, with OPMs just beginning to emerge dominators of the Subic bay line, soon enough, to be deprived of that basic work, personal (or personal) right by a system of government that would (assuming you are not Estrada) own the country into a nation composed of just three-by-by-by-by-by, how will Chavez change the

Forks

I often wonder what my life would have been like had I chosen a different path. Would I have been happier? Would my life be more simple? What would have happened if I had taken the other branch of the fork in "the road of life"?

The instance, had I pursued my childhood dream of becoming a doctor, I'd probably be a pediatrician now, or surgeon, in color knowledge. But I am only gloss. And that's life, whenever you hit a fork in the road, you can only take one path. And once you've taken your chosen path, you will never know what would have happened if you took the other.

The result of our life are inextricably connected to the choices of a series of forks and crossroads, and these make our lives more exciting. The major forks in my road were those that I reached after college.

My college graduation was definitely one of the most memorable events in my life, and it marked a big celebration. After all, I was about to make my parents proud when the pieces of paper arrived I was finally free. But surprisingly, after the celebration died down, I felt empty. I learned that my college diploma and the honors I had received were not enough to prepare me for the world that I was about to face, the real world.

I had just turned 19 that...and I felt lost, confused and even scared. Then, I had to make a choice between exploring the field of medicine or staying put in the more familiar world of chemistry. I chose the latter because it was the world I lived in during my college days. If I managed to overcome those fears, I told myself, then I would go on living more for the rest of my life. Simply put, I chose what I thought to be the safer path.

Taking the path immediately led me to another fork. Should I look for a job in industry or in the academe? I decided to take my time before making that crucial decision.

My graduation took two weeks. The problem was that I was supposed to spend an evaluating what I wanted to do with my life now spent mostly on sleeping.

I was stuck at this fork for about a year. In that one year, I slept as long as I could, used my eyes least of my back rubbed from too much time in bed, or spent my evening where I wasn't sleeping, I was watching Tv Commercials. I would just watch the people around me. Everyone was moving. Everyone was doing something. Everyone was living but I the way I was meant to be lived. Everybody, except for me, was standing still.

Then one day my father told me something I will never forget. "Cherry, life doesn't end after college," he said.

My father's words, simple though they may be, magically shook the rest of the stones that were in it. I was young and healthy, and I had the whole world in front of me. I had to do something with my life.

With that realization came a decision: I would take the path leading to the academe. Again, I had chosen to take the safer path.

So after a year long hiatus, I went back to the comforting arms of the place that I considered my second home, the university. One of the professors was Sir Rafael. That was a man's name of those who were signing notes on the blackboard; I was the one writing on it. I quickly discovered that I had a passion for teaching. I liked what I was doing, and I was glad I had discovered the right path.

Two years have come, I can get tired of the place, even if it was providing me security. I yearned for a new environment. One day, I woke up having another fork in my road. Should I continue living in the confines of my hometown or should I close ocean and explore the world, literally and figuratively?

As due time, I was 23...and still feeling lost and confused. But I wasn't scared anymore. I had become a bit more bold and daring—bold enough to choose a riskier path. I decided to carry out of my comfort zone and jump into the unknown, regardless of the perils awaiting me.

It was a decision that I'll never regret for it meant meeting several whom I now consider best friends. It meant having to do every thing by myself. But I had to do it.

It has been almost four years since I started treading the path. I had known chosen. Though I'm happy with my choice, I still feel lost. I still feel scared. I still feel confused. In fact, I've encountered a lot of forks and bumps in the road, which sometimes made me want to run back to the security of the previous existence. The latest example, which I didn't know I had, coupled with my fear for God's protection from abandoning this branch of the fork.

Although I pretend to know it so avoid the issue, the answer that a few more steps from where I am now, I'll be facing another fork. One side will lead me back in my hometown and the other will keep me on the path I am presently.

Honestly, I'd difficult to tell which path to take. The first will take me to the familiar while the latter leads to the unknown. But the second seems to a more professional career.

When you are 9 or even 23, it's OK to be scared and confused. But someone who's about to turn 27 needs to at least contemplate and decision. I hope that when I reach the next fork, I can confidently say: "I do. I do. I'm 27. I am in control of my life, and I am ready to face whatever I want to get." Then I hope I will be able to walk in the direction of my choice path, without looking back.

Michelle D. Regalado, 26, is studying for her Ph.D. in chemistry at Georgetown University.

Young Blood

Michelle D. Regalado

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Any welcome contributions from the newsmakers being and future.—Ed.

Notice to Youngblood contributors:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph, together with your address, age and the school, college and/or work you're involved in. If required, the publisher credit building and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

They Said

Merit over seniority

"In promotions to the ranks of lieutenant colonel, colonel and general, we are going to put more emphasis on merit than seniority."
—National Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado on the new projecting system that of the promotion system in the military

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Lack of imagination

I AGREE WITH CONRADO DE Quiroz: Our country has never lacked for heroic characters to Glorie Macapagal-Arroyo. If only we would love the cure to see them. (PDI, 4/27/06)

Yes, we have so many good citizens who show much in the way of bravery and integrity, putting to shame our politicians. There are countless who have shown their love of country not by running for public office, but through their own acts of courage and patriotism.

We have Tony Meloto, founder and executive director of the very successful Gawad Kalinga. There's Benjamin Abalos, Jr. Ramon Magsaysay awardee for his unselfish commitment to indigenous Filipinos (Bangsa, in essence, he's not that bigot) for peace and human rights.

But then, even a child could be a better leader than Mr. Arroyo.

We have tons of heroes and heroines lacked for alternatives. What we lack is imagination.

It's not just the politicians who can lead us. Any ordinary citizen can. As long as he's willing, and has the people's trust. Sadly, in ordinary citizens don't seem to be willing to exercise public office.

—JOSEPH DOMINIC G. ROMERO
jandr4all@gmail.com

Curtailing freedom in the name of delicadeza

THE BOOK STORE "TOLL CHIEF exacts vigilant border product" (PDI, 4/26/06) was so divided and subdivisible. I guess it just really showed what kind of society we now live in the Philippines.

It is so sad to see that our freedom of speech is being curtailed by the present administration in the name of "delicadeza" when the person heading it herself doesn't know the meaning of the word.

What's even so **that** our people are just willing to take it as it is. I thought we had learned our lessons from our experience with the dictatorship, but then again I must have thought wrong.

We are now back to the same predicament. It's not that people don't see this yet. I hear that our people are not too blind to see all the wicked things happening around us.

—ERIC TEJAS,
eatejas@yahoo.com

Politics-free CSC a must in parliamentary system

THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION is a constitutional body that was established more than a hundred years ago to ensure merit and fitness, efficiency and honesty in the civilian bureaucracy. Currently, the government is more and more relying on **[illegible]** to issue guns the presidential power of discretion. The "best fit principle" tends to signify under-the-table and circumstances, based on the qualifications standards set by the CSC, but this might not be the case on areas.

Under President Marcos, the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) was established to develop a corps of senior managers with the competency and development orientation to manage government agencies.

Under President Aquino, a number of people, recruited from the private sector, were appointed to third-level positions and took the required examinations and training for security of tenure. Having her term, she appointed a number of presidential advisers as well.

When Fidel Ramos assumed office in 1992, he appointed a member from the third-level ranks, including Alexis Cabrera, Lito Banayo, Rodolfo Coloma (undersecretary) and Lina Laigo (social welfare department), to Cabinet positions which ordinarily require political appointees.

During President Estrada's term, the Career Executive Service Board, of which I was the chairman, submitted a "blue book" which contained the names of eligible career executive service officers (Cesos) from whom the President could draw his appointees. It's sad that it didn't happen.

Indeed, consolidating the relationship between the CSC and the Office of the President is enduring. The question is this: what is the civil service role on presidential appointees? What is the room wherein is not influenced? Actually what kind of a relationship is there between the chair of the CSC and the President?

I am reminded of the message of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that a CSC must commit to remember the basic principle that all civil servants work. This ought to be the Lagom approach of the CSC and the Office of the President. We need a strong civil service insulated from partisan politics if we want equitable economy in terms of government.

Indeed, when you have good people in government, how can you lose? In the same vein, when you do not have good people, how can you stay safe?

—CESAR EDUARDO C. DULLEN,
secretary general,
Philippine National Civil Service Union;
former chair,
Civil Service Commission;
former secretary,
Department of Social Welfare and Development

Meralco explains delay in refund

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO THE LETTER OF Violeta D. Reyes titled "Woes among the poorest of the poor" (PDI, 4/25/06).

Reyes submitted the related requirements to our Manila/Quezon Branch in January 2006. She, however, failed to submit the required BIR Certificate of Registration (COR) and instead submitted the 2304 Income Tax Return of an unknown named Rubay Maldeon for the registered customer, Reyes should have submitted her TIN (Taxpayer Identification Number/TIN). This submission is supposed to facilitate the matching of our report on taxes withheld with the customer's name in the BIR's "BN database. Because of Reyes' failure to submit her TIN, there was need to further evaluate her refund claim.

Her claim was approved after we found Officer-established that Rubay Maldeon has a transaction being operated by Reyes at her residence. Had she submitted the COR, which we there she aware of our establishment and an survey the additional evaluation would not have been necessary and the delay in the processing would have been avoided.

Since Reyes chose the Ward Credit to Bill wherein her first credit investment July 2006, will be reflected in her next bill scheduled at the end of April 2006.

To explain the logic behind the requirements, Revenue Memorandum Order No. 20-2000 issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue states that "The Certificate of Registration (COR) shall be submitted to Meralco by all current and refund (if customer's privilege or the release of the refund) or applications to bill in order for Meralco to get the Tax Identification Number (TIN)." The above-mentioned details are necessary to ascertain that the claimant is the right person entitled to the refund. This is to protect both the customer and our company from possible fraudulent claims.

—EDITA CUSAJAR,
vice president and head,
Corporate Communications,
Meralco, Pasig City

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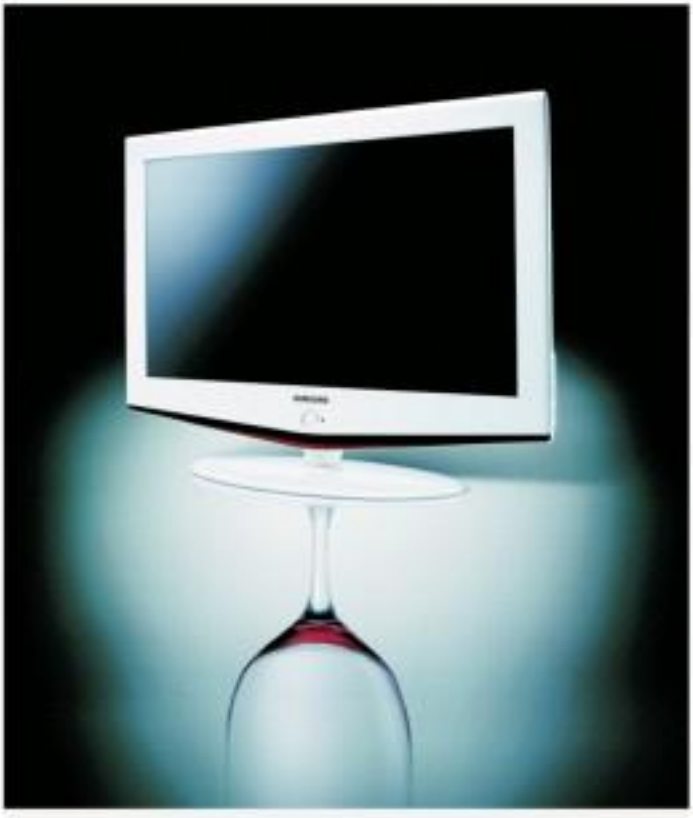

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SAMSUNG

Velarde hits Cha-cha ...

From page A-1

EX-PRESIDENT Estrada in a pensive mood at his Greenhills residence he hasn't set foot in in five years. AMY COSO

Erap comes ...

From page A-1

years since he had been in his own house," Estrada's cousin Senator Jinggoy Estrada told the business.

"Happy birthday, Mr. President," Jinggoy added.

Estrada whispered in his English-language mother, Doña Mary Ejercito.

She nodded in response, in an apparent recognition of her son. "Mabuhayak sanam Di sooll (make sure only)," one female supporter said as she swiped the tears from her eyes.

Doña Mary lives in a nearby hotel. On her arrival at 9:40, she was taken inside the house in a wheelchair.

Before Doña Mary was wheeled in and while she was still in front of the house, the former President greeted her mother happy birthday. Kissed her several times on the forehead and wished her good health and a longer life, in the applause of the hundreds supporters.

The Estrada clan were inside where they sang for Doña Mary the happy birthday song.

12-hour liberty

The 69-year-old Estrada early this week was allowed by the Sandiganbayan to attend the birthday of his mother.

Under the court order, Estrada was to stay for 12 hours at his Polk residence after which he was to be returned to his detention at his new house in Tanay, Rizal, where he is held on plunder and perjury charges.

Estrada's lawyers see nothing inconsistent of his bail order, the latest of several granted the deposed leader by the court since his arrest in April 2001.

Staff in tears

Estrada arrived shortly before 10:30 a.m. escorted by Chief Supt. Orlando Sarcoal, PNP security director, and Sandiganbayan Sheriff Ed Urbino.

The household staff, some of whom were crying, met Estrada and he warmly greeted them.

Estrada and Estrada brought with him assorted vegetables for his mother, which he had harvested from his vegetable patch in his hometown.

Trial reset for tomorrow

Doña Mary arrived at about noon in a black Mercedes Benz limousine driven by Jude Ejercito, her grandson.

Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice and Special Division Chair Teresita Leonardo-De Castro and Associate Justices Francisco Villaruz Jr. and Diosdado Peralta agreed to allow Estrada to attend his mother's birthday after Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio and the Philippine National Police joined no objection.

The arraignment over the hearing of Estrada's cases, originally scheduled for yesterday, to tomorrow.

Estrada's previous request to be allowed to visit his home had been opposed by Villa-Ignacio.

VELARDE: Cha-cha "a kind of power grab all over again." ARNOLD ALMACEN

agree to unspecified transitory provisions to the interim period.

In remarks to the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, Velarde said he understood that the terms of all incumbent officials would be extended and they would form the interim parliament without the benefit of an election under the transitory provisions being discussed in Congress.

"This, to my simple reading, is a kind of power grab all over again, robbing the people of their right and power to choose their national leaders," said Velarde, the politically influential leader of the Catholic charismatic group.

The 56-year-old Velarde said he was trying to bring together Mr. Arroyo, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Speaker Jose de Venecia and other congressional leaders in a meeting to resolve differences over the mode of amending the Constitution.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, however, said that Velarde's opposition to the initiative was too late. He said that the campaign had gathered the required number of signatures—6.3 million of the required votes—to push ahead.

"It appears that the group got the 3 percent per district and 12 percent nationwide," said Ermita. He also pointed out that Velarde was not against Charter change but the mode of carrying it out.

Cha-cha cannot be avoided

Asked National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales: "Where to amend the Constitution, either through a people's initiative or some other means will continue ... The issue for change has come and (it) can't be avoided."

Velarde announced in an exclusive interview with the Inquirer last week his opposition to the signature campaign. He said El Shaddai would hold a prayer rally for the enlightenment of those behind the people's initiative.

He also said he had instructed his members, estimated to be five to seven million strong, not to sign the petitions being distributed by the pro-Arroyo group Sigaw ng Bayan.

Velarde pointed out that the Supreme Court had ruled in 1997 that a people's initiative was illegal without an enabling law. He said that a constitutional convention would take a long time to realize desired Charter changes.

"I have total confidence that the people in respect and obey the laws of the land when its high officials do the opposite?" said Velarde.

Most feasible

"The most feasible process now is a constituent assembly," he said, "under certain parameters if the Senate and the House leadership can come together and that is what I'm planning to do—bring them together with the President and set parameters on a constituent assembly so that Cha-cha is done the proper way."

The constituent assembly will consist of the present Senate and House, which will look narrow or propose constitutional amendments.

Velarde said he believed the Senate, majority of whose members were opposed to the constituent assembly were "reasonable people" who "can consider this mode of changing the Constitution."

"It is for this reason that I have consented to be interviewed by the Philippine Daily Inquirer on these issues, as a voice in the desert" to sound the alarm on the unforeseen that will come if this illegal people's initiative and its agenda is not scrutinized," Velarde said.

He said the proposed transitory provision did not set a date for the election of the members of the regular parliament and preached by a vote of two-thirds of all members of the interim parliament.

"We do not know how and where this interim Parliament, with nobody to check it, will bring our country since it is installed," he said.

Velarde said he had informed Mr Arroyo about his opposition to the people's initiative.

"She said she will look into these provisions and study them further," he said.

Velarde said he Venecia also asked him to endorse the people's initiative and that he "staunchly sold" the Speaker he would not support an initiative that did not come from the people but from government officials and being forced on them the benefit of thorough deliberations.

Still a GMA supporter

Velarde said he remained supportive of Mr. Arroyo and her completing her term up to 2010.

Opposition politicians seeking Mr. Arroyo's ouster since last year over vote-rigging and corruption allegations have accused her of trying to change the Constitution to remove her grip on power and divert public attention from recent scandals.

Mr. Arroyo has said the Philippines needs to reform its flawed political system to hasten the country's economic growth.

The proposed Charter amendments would do away with the bicame, eliminating a crucial institution that checks wrongdoing and excesses of the executive branch, said Velarde.

Former Supreme Court Justice Vicente

HUGS at last Hugs and confidences against Cha-cha at the Asian Social Institute in Manila, Wednesday. RAFFY LERMA

Mendoza, testifying before the Senate committee on constitutional amendments yesterday, urged the Senate to agree to a nonrobust assembly or forfeit its right to be involved in a revision.

Salvador Carlos, a former justice and law dean of the University of the Philippines, issued the same plea in Manila.

With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

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Across the NATION

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Protests fail to stop Korean shipyard

SUBIC, ZAMBALES—A SOUTH KOREAN SHIPping company on Tuesday proceeded with the groundbreaking ceremony for the country's biggest shipyard facility here amid protests from village residents who refused to leave the project site.

Officials of Kouijn Heavy Industries and Construction Co. Ltd. and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) led the ceremony, which signaled the start of the shipyard's construction.

Kim Ho Cho, Hanjin chairman, said the construction of the 10-billion-dollar shipyard "will further cement the strong bonds" between South Korea and the Philippines. The project is expected to provide at least 20,000 jobs for Filipino skilled workers.

Gov. Vicente Magsaysay said he was optimistic that the project would continue despite the failure to clearing the area of the villagers slated to own and stay the demolition of their houses.

"We made it sure that this ceremony has taken place and would not be hostile to the Korean company," Magsaysay said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was scheduled to attend the ceremonies, but she reportedly cancelled the engagement after learning that the construction had not been cleared.

"It might have come to the President's knowledge that the clearing operations had not been fully implemented in the area," Magsaysay said, referring to Mrs Arroyo's absence.

But the governor assured officials of the South Korean firm that the Arroyo was supporting the project.

Residents in Jiko Agustilan have continued to defy the clearing operations, claiming that Hanjin failed to give them just compensation and a proper relocation site.

At least 300 families will be displaced by the project.

Two persons, including a 9-year-old girl, were hurt on Tuesday after they refused to leave their houses while it was being demolished.

Lawyer Romeo Agregado, SBMA senior deputy administrator for support services, said the affected will be given a total of 56 compensated and given jobs during the project's construction.

Agregado urged settlers to leave their houses and warned he is contemplating evacuation by force.—AFJay Jiboa-Ilano, PDI Central Luzon Desk

SEA REST
Fishermen call it a day and rest in their fishing boat docked at Punta Dumalag in Davao City. The fishermen were repairing their boat to set sail for deeper waters.

ROUNDUP

50 Moro rebels yield

NPA rebels burn equipment

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CASUALTY

'Jueteng' return to Isabela gets protection from gov't exec

INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Lito Jon Rondayrol
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmerano

Elder's search for Japanese roots leads to better lives

DOMINGO Sasaki San Lorenzo Jesalo, with glasses, poses with his sons and relatives the first time he met them in 1974.

By Jon Encarnacion Jr.
Newsbreak, Camarines Sur

DOMINGO SASAKI SAN Lorenzo, 67, an elder of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Milaor, Camarines Sur, shows no bitterness about the adversities he had encountered in the past.

The youngest of four children of Masaichiro San Lorenzo, Domingo lost his father, Takeo Sasaki, who died in their two-story house in Tokyo's Nogo City when American planes bombed the capital on May 3, 1942. Domingo was then only 3 years old.

After the defeat of Japanese soldiers in World War II, Domingo's family experienced poverty for the last time. His mother struggled hard to earn a living so the children could finish high school.

To avoid ridicule and persecution after the war because of his Japanese ancestry, the family members did not use Sasaki as surname.

Due to a twist of fate, or what he believes to be God's hand leading him away from unscrupulous businessmen, Domingo found an opportunity to "reunite" the surname deprived of his family for many years.

That was in 1974, or 32 years after the war, when Domingo was installing a door bell at the house of a close friend in Pagsanjan, Laguna.

He was introduced to Alvino Fukamura, a Japanese and chief of flower operations in the Philippines, who was staying at the house of his friend in Mandaluyong Village, a middle-class subdivision in the east.

Engaged in a banter with the Japanese executive, Domingo shared his longing to reestablish links with his father's relatives in Japan, whose whereabouts his family in the Philippines had little knowledge of.

Fukamura learned that the Japanese police force had granted a late newspaperboy and his surviving children—descendants of Japanese nationals and soldiers who died during the war. He asked Domingo to provide him proof of his Japanese ancestry to help him locate the Sasaki in Japan.

Domingo returned the following day and gave Fukamura his father's full identity, photos and marriage contract.

In just two weeks after the business executive left for Japan, Domingo received a telegram from the Japanese Embassy informing him that a round-trip ticket and travel money had been sent by his relatives to him through its Manila office.

He flew to Japan on the same month that the ticket and invitation arrived.

Touching reunion

"I [arrived] at the Narita Airport in 1974, overwhelmed with emotion before I saw my relatives waving placards bearing my name," Domingo recounted.

He pointed out for a second or so, before he could even greet his grandparents, other sons of his real ex-wives also who welcomed him. His Japanese took relatives were quick to catch him before he slipped on the airport lobby. He was brought to a waiting car where he regained consciousness.

Later, he found out through his Japanese relatives, that the search for his father's family in Japan was broadcast on national television, using grabs of the photos and other documents he had given Fukamura.

At 75, Domingo came to know more about his father, the true brand he wanted to remember of his Japanese relatives.

Takeo, the father he knew only through countless tales from his mother, was the eldest in a brood of six children. He was born on May 5, 1899.

Takeo's colorful adventure outside Japan, Tokyo, that 15-year-old, went to the Philippines in 1914. In 1924, he returned to his homeland to what was left from the last days his family would see him alive. He decided to return to the Philippines and settle there.

In Manila, he studied English and Spanish, and became someone in Filipino as part of efforts to establish his residency and work status to his adopted country.

In the early 1920s, he moved to Naga and learned to speak Bicol.

He married Macaraeg in a civil wedding ceremony. Takeo, the father he knew only through countless tales from his mother, was the eldest in a brood of six children. He was born on May 5, 1899.

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TAKEO Sasaki, the paternal grandfather of the Sasaki clan in Masbate and Milaor, refused to fight with Japanese imperial forces against the advancing Filipino guerrillas.

DOMINGO Sasaki San Lorenzo, 67, was sure after it a smile with the family in life and couple luxury embraced relatives of his Japanese roots.

Feb. 6, 1939 and engaged in a hay-and-sell business in Tabaco, providing his family a comfortable life.

Lourdes San Lorenzo Oliva, 35, Domingo's elder sister and the third child of Takeo, said her father managed to maintain frequent communication with his relatives in Japan. She said their father never failed to make his generous in Japan every time a new baby was born.

After the children were recorded in the family records of the Sasaki in Hiroshima.

The couple had their fourth baby in the house and a powerful radio transmitter until the war broke out in 1941.

Translator

During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, Takeo became a translator of the Japanese Imperial Army and rendered valuable duty as guard of the Japanese garrison where captured and suspected guerrillas and their supporters were imprisoned and tortured.

Domingo said his mother recounted how Takeo refused to go to the guerrilla camp in Mauraon, Donsol, Camarines Sur where he fled the Americans so he could not betray.

"My father told my mother that he did not want his Japanese compatriots to see him as a traitor if he accepted the safe conduct pass and refuge offered by his Bicolano friend, a guerrilla commander by the name of Tavedia," he said.

"This guerrilla opened an opportunity for my father and the family, even as my father was in the service of the Japanese Imperial Army," he added.

But Takeo had other things in mind. He wanted to die in dignity.

"He believed that if he were with us, he would have endangered his entire family for he chose to stay in our house and waited for the death," Domingo recalled.

Takeo's trusted remains were retrieved by his companions, brought to Japan and buried in a site he dedicated to Japanese who lost in Hiroshima in the 1940s.

Domingo said 1974 was the most unforgettable period in his life when he was able to meet together his Japanese ancestry and help transform the lives of all members of the Sasaki-Jesalo in the Philippines.

Being of Japanese descent, all the members—the Sasaki generation—were given economic recognition as sakkyu or half-Japanese. They were entitled to live, stay and work in Japan for as long as they wanted.

The Sasaki descendants even found themselves as carriers of Takeo's ancestry that bestowed on them preferential treatment on Immigration counters and made them distinct from other foreign nationals residing in Japan.

Entry to Japan

It was in 1997 when the full benefits accorded to a child ancestral to make a difference as far as Domingo is concerned. The second generation Sasaki wanted to emigrate to Japan to work.

Seventy-five members, including the spouses of the nephews and nieces, were employed there, he said.

At present, all of Domingo's three children work in Japan. He said his wife take care of their grandchildren in Masbate.

"I am also happy and very personal and domestic needs are provided by my children. Periodically, I visit my children and Japanese relatives," Domingo said.

His eldest daughter Emmy, who is on vacation in their hometown, explained that she did not intend to become a permanent resident in Japan.

She said her siblings just wanted to work there and earn at least more than thrice the salary an ordinary employee receives in the Philippines. "It's a very expensive place and you only go there to work, save and save for the future," she said.

Domingo said he thanked God for the blessings because the opportunity for his family to work in Japan had given them a comfortable life he could not imagine that he could provide himself.

In the early years of his married life, he worked as a salesman of Pacheenthik appliances. He also took on part-time jobs to supplement his income.

Mayor Gil Benemerez, who knew the Sasaki clan, attended to Domingo's family as belonging to one of the poorest families in town.

The landscape of Barangay Hubo and declivities where they live changed when they became stable jobs, said Benemerez.

Not so long ago, the Sasaki lived in dilapidated shacks in the villages where they resided as farm laborers or vendors in rice farms.

It was, however, the legacy left behind by his father, a Japanese war hero, whose identity was buried deep in Domingo's memories. His mother, who lived with him until she died at the age of 89, would have probably agreed.

Relatives of 'NPA rebels' arrested by cops appeal to GMA

By Dollie T. Mallari Jr.
Bagnayan City

HOSTAGE BY THREE MONTHS, the two girls, aged 2 and 3 years old, were both crying while asking for their father, whom they last saw on Friday before he left their house in Barangay Tolentino East in Tagaytay City for, so he...

"The children are always crying. They have been asking for their Daddy," said Sherill Blanayo, 28, who was also in one room.

Government troops arrested Michael Blanayo on Friday on suspicion that he was either People's Army guerrilla.

And like the Blanayo kids, the family of Ruo Dulnuan was still in shock after seeing him handcuffed to a flash report on ABS-CBN. He was held by police as another rebel.

"My 4th mother is always in tears. She's always waiting for words on the whereabouts of my father," Emma, Dulnuan's eldest son, said.

The families of Dulnuan, 50, and Blanayo, 30, have appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo and police officials to immediately release the two.

"My husband is not an NPA member," Sherill wanted to tell the President.

"He went to work for their scholar but we don't even know where they are. We're here in Camp Castro, but we were told by police that they are not there. They [police] referred us to the Cavalcanti police group," Emma said.

The families strongly denied that the two are communist guerrillas.

"He's not a subversive. My father maintains a pineapple plantation for a living," said Emma.

Dulnuan and Blanayo, both of Barangay Tolentino East in Tagaytay, were each other like father and son. Both are cockfighting aficionados, according to barangay residents.

Gamblers

"They are both gambling hunters but definitely not NPA members," said a barangay village official.

Blanayo is also a caretaker of fighting cocks and sees as cockpit owner.

The two families insist that the gamblers were not members of any barangay organization.

According to Emma, a person carried in their house on Friday afternoon and revealed their names on the warrant for the search Talisay City in Batangas.

Sherill said Father dropped by their house and picked up Mariano to serve as his companion in the trip back to Tagaytay.

"Before he left, he even asked me to cook his favorite pork adobo for dinner. But they never came back, until we received the information that they were arrested," she said.

On Sunday, the human rights group Karapatan-Southern Tagalog reported that two Cavite peasant activists and three Batangas farmers had been missing in the boundary of Tagaytay and Batangas provinces.

Police presentation

The next day, police reported the arrest in Tagaytay of six suspected NPA members who had allegedly planned to kidnap Monday's celebration of Labor Day.

Dulnuan and Blanayo were presented by police in two of the suspects. Also arrested were in Lumbreras, Mario Gotang, Apol Abdaulio Pagsin and Raul Garcelin.

Allegedly recovered from the group were subversive documents filled from two laptop computers and flash disks, maps, assorted weapons allegedly representing the purchase of improvised explosive components, and mobile phones.

Lanes, wife of Lumbreras, said police had not all searched there to see or talk solely her husband. He appealed to authorities to allow the suspects to defend themselves.

Cavite Rep. Jesus Crispin Remulla asserted that three of the five arrested were mere legitimate peasant leaders in his district.

Remulla cannot doubt over the claims of the police and the New Intelligence Group that Pangan, Cancelan and Sarmiento were collared after attending a meeting with other communist rebels in Tagaytay.

The three were held together with Dulnuan and Blanayo as direct it is as Jon Friday.

Peasant leaders

But Remulla said he could vouch that the accused men were leaders of the Bahaynon ng mga Magbubukid sa Bukid (Barangayanan Ka), the provincial chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP).

Remulla admitted that he was close to Pingin, a former information officer of Kamagsasaka and that Pingin's group helped him in the 2004 elections.

"I know personally Aaron because he used to visit me saying he is their adviser. I see for the farmers. I even gave the list of the consumers," he added.

Remulla, who represents the province's third district, which is largely agricultural, is also known to be an ardent supporter and advocate of farmers' rights in Cavite.

Supt. Rodel Sermonia, Cavite police intelligence chief, said the arrested men were indeed leaders of a farmers' group in the province. With a report from Marites Barroso

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Manhunt on for 2 suspects in casino financier's slay /A10
■ Vendor tags accused cop in Dacer-Corbito double murder case /A10
■ Manila set to break Guinness breastfeeding record /A10

DESPITE pressure from transport groups for an increase, the LTFRB will stick to its policy of maintaining current fare prices, while watching out for a rise in diesel prices. AFP

LTFRB rules out fare increase

Agency to monitor diesel cost

By Alexis Romero

THE LAND TRANSPORTATION FRANCHISING Regulatory Board (LTFRB) yesterday ruled out any fare increase until diesel pump prices reach P35 per liter.

And even if prices do reach the P35 level, LTFRB chair Ma. Elena Bautista stressed that this does not mean that she would automatically approve pending petitions for fare hikes as she would have to first study the possible effects and improvements of such a move.

Diesel now costs P32.79 to P34.32 per liter at Shell, Petron, Chevron Philippines, Total and Unioil control their pump prices by 50 centavos per liter on April 30.

Bautista told reporters at the Devanadera Forum in Greenhills, San Juan, that her agency may not likely to entertain any fare hike petition at the moment, in line with the government's policy of keeping transport fares at their present level.

Adding that a fare raise was not the answer to spiraling oil prices unbelievable, Bautista said the government has already prepared several measures to cushion the effect of rising oil prices next month. These include the use of alternative fuel and the possible suspension of tariff rates imposed on petroleum products.

Transport groups had earlier warned commuters that they would seek a fare hike following a series of fuel price hikes implemented by local oil firms.

Among the groups which had filed a petition with the LTFRB were the Philippine Confederation of Drivers and Operators Association of Concerned Taxicab Operators, which is seeking an increase of P1.50, and the United Transport Coalition, which has asked for a hike of P1.35.

Other groups with pending petitions are the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines, the Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines, Bikkit Jeepney Operators and Drivers Alliance, and the National Transport Workers Union (PTWU).

Operators of air-conditioned buses have also asked for a P1 increase while ordinary bus operators are seeking a 90-centavo adjustment.

'Pink Cloth' picks up steam

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A TRAFFIC DIVERTER OF THE METropolitan Manila Development Authority was summoned by Angelito Vergel de Dios, the agency's Traffic Operations Center director, after he failed to implement the "Pink Cloth" traffic scheme that is supposed to ease the Shaw-Ortigas bottleneck in Mandaluyong City.

Vergel de Dios said he immediately asked Rosalino Nicolas for an explanation after receiving a complaint from a commuter.

"There have been no other complaints except this one. The commuter was upset by the delay, noting that she waited for almost 30 minutes before she was able to get a cab. That's why she wished the scheme for not implementing the pink cloth scheme," the MMDA official added.

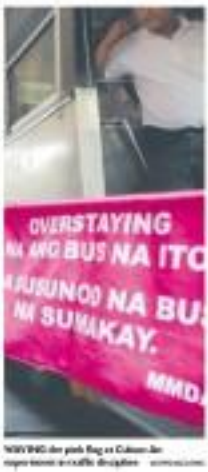
Vergel de Dios, meanwhile, said the incident indicated that a lot of people know about the MMDA's latest campaign to instill discipline in bus drivers plying Edsa.

"There's already an awareness about it because of this publicity," he said.

The "Pink Cloth" scheme is aimed at discouraging bus drivers from hogging loading point/s by passengers along Edsa.

Under the scheme, MMDA traffic enforcers raise a pole with a pink cloth attached to it in front of bus drivers to prevent more passengers from boarding.

The campaign was first implemented in Cubao, Quezon City last week, followed by the southbound lane of Edsa near Ayala Avenue in Makati City, both sides of Edsa near North Avenue in Quezon City, and the Magallanes Interchange.



WAVING the pink flag as Cubao the implementer on traffic discipline

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Prof. Antonio remains active in various business endeavors, particularly in the Philippine Real Estate industry where he has accumulated over 37 years of experience in various aspects of the property business. He is CEO and founder of LAND-EDGE Consulting, CEO of Phoenix Land Inc., developer of La Fresnedas Grand Farms, CEO of Eurotech Land, developer of Bacoor-Medicion South residential villages and Chairman of Crescent Woods Resort Club.

Prof. Antonio holds a Master in Business Management degree (With Distinction) from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics degree (Summa Cum Laude) from De La Salle University (DLSU).

EQUAS

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Manhunt on for 5 in financier's slay

NBI to ask for suspects' expatriation

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION has launched a manhunt for five Chinese allegedly involved in the death of a casino financier late last year.

NBI Special Task Force chief Reynaldo Esmeralda yesterday said that arrest warrants had been issued for Lee Wei Aung or Anthony Lee, Hsu Hong or Xiao Hong, Huang Cheng Ge or Dil, William Co, and Yao Yan Feng. The five are from mainland China.

A sixth suspect, Allen Mendoza, was arrested shortly after Hu Yun Tek, or Simeon Ty, was found dead on Orestado Macapagal Avenue in Pasay City last December 1.

"We have information that the suspects fled to China after the incident," Esmeralda told reporters.

Esmeralda said that if the Bureau of Immigration confirms that the suspects had indeed left the country, the NBI would file a request for their extradition to the Department of Justice.

The NBI official said the motive for the killing appeared to be a fight between Ty and Lee over control of the casino.

Like Ty, Lee was also a financier, lending money to people who gambled in casinos. The four other Chinese, including Mendoza, worked for Lee. "Their squabble apparently involved millions of pesos," Esmeralda said.

The NBI STF chief said that Ty, a financier at the Grand Hyatt Hotel and Casino in Manila, arrived at the Nai Chi Ko Hotel ETF for Gen. Tri for a drinking spree with several Chinese businessmen.

While Ty was asleep, Lee allegedly grabbed the victim's bag, which contained P300,000, and ordered his men to confront Ty's bodyguards so that they would leave the premises.

The suspects then brought Ty in a gray Honda Civic car driven by Mendoza.

The NBI STF chief said that during investigations, Mendoza admitted that Hsu slit the victim's throat while he drove the car toward Macapagal Avenue where they allegedly dumped the victim's body.

STILL HOT
A boy dives while his companions swing from a rope before taking the plunge into the Pasig River to get relief from the heat. Summer may be nearly over, according to the weather bureau, but the temperature continues to soar. AP

Military camp a restricted area

I MAY BE A JOURNALIST BUT I can't disagree with the orders of Gen. Generoso Senga, Armed Forces chief of staff, restricting the movements of reporters inside Camp Aguinaldo.

Reporters are now allowed on, by the rulemin of the AFP Public Information Office and the Defense Press Corps office.

Camp Aguinaldo, AFP general headquarters, is a military camp. And a military camp is a restricted area, meaning, not all places

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

in it are accessible to civilians and unauthorized military personnel.

At the same way, the Pentagon, headquarters of the US armed forces, is a highly restricted area. American reporters assigned to cover the Pentagon are not allowed to stroll into certain areas in the huge military building complex.

There are places in a military camp that cannot be shown to civilians for security reasons. Media people, being civilians, should understand this.

* * *

Our government should throw its full support behind a Filipino domestic helper in Saudi Arabia who chopped off the virginal part of her employer when he sexually assaulted her.

The Pinoy was just defending her honor. Like most Filipino provincial lasses (most housemaids come from the provinces), she was acting true to form. Provincial maidens would rather die or fall than get defiled.

The unnamed maid is now in a Saudi jail where conditions are worse than our jails. I've heard reports about Saudi guards sexually abusing both male and female inmates.

In several instances I have expressed my sympathy for two more patriots who ran afoul of the law in their host countries but who still were helped by our government. But this time around, this writer is appealing to our government to move heaven and earth to have the Filipino maid freed from detention and sent home immediately.

* * *

I wonder when we Filipinos will see the day when we stop sending our compatriots to work in countries where they are treated much like the African slaves in days bygone in the 1700s.

Vendor tags policeman in Dacer-Corbito case

A POLICEMAN ACCUSED OF INvolvement in the Dacer-Corbito double murder case was positively identified yesterday by a witness as the man who had opened fire four of the victims' white Toyota Revo in November 2000.

Willy Cabuquin, 28, a sidewalk vendor from Makati City, tagged SPO4 Hermino Sobrevega, who he testified during a hearing held at the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 30.

Sobrevega and four other policemen formerly assigned with the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF), along with five civilian agents, have been charged with abducting and killing publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito.

Cabuquin recounted that at around 11 a.m. on Nov. 24, 2000, he saw a white car overtake a white Toyota Revo at the corner of Ortigas Highway and Zobel Roxas Street.

He said he saw a policeman, whom he later identified as Sobrevega, alight from the white car and knock on the driver's window. Sobrevega then opened the van's door, forced the driver to slight from the Revo and got into another car. "I saw the vehicle travel south, traversing on the Skyway flyover," Cabuquin said in Filipino. Abargacon C. Ordin

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABELLA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital invites interested bidders for the bidding of:

	ABC
Foodstuffs	P1,379,838.00

Bid documents and eligibility requirements may be secured at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office. For inquiries, contact tel. nos. 732-71-46.

Schedule of Activities:

Pre-bid Conference	May 15, 2006	Reception Hall, 2:00 pm
Bid Opening	May 30, 2006	Anesthesia Office, 2:00 pm

The DJFMH reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason whatsoever, award formally and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated is the most advantageous to the government.

The DJFMH-BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) EUREN S. MARQUEZ, M.D.
Vice-Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pay St., Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Water District through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered and accredited by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for Eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the contracts/ project:

Name of the Project	Contract for Proposed Pondering 2 Production Well
Location	Pondering 2 Production Well
Brief Description	Well Construction for Proposed Pondering 2 Production Well to include Well Construction and Well Development
Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)	P1,200,000.00
Contract Duration	90 Working Days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed

Prospective Contractors shall possess a valid PCAB License with a Registration Particular to Water Supply, has undertaken a similar project with an amount of 50% of the proposed project for the bidding, and have key construction equipment (pumps, tractor, or other machines available for construction of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirements indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The BAC shall use a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check. Only bidders who are rated as the Preliminarily Eligible(s) in the Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be considered.

All participants eligible by Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference shall be guidelines by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The possible activities are listed:

	BAC ACTIVITIES	Schedule
1.	Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) including PCAB License	April 28 to May 5, 2006
2.	Issuance of Eligibility Forms	May 5 to 15, 2006
3.	Submission of Eligibility Requirements	May 8 to 12, 2006
4.	Submission of Results of Eligibility Check	May 15, 2006
5.	Issuance of Bid Documents	May 16 to 19, 2006
6.	Pre-Bid Conference	May 23, 2006
7.	Submission and Opening of Bids	June 1, 2006

The Eligibility Forms will be available at the Bid Room, Zamboanga City Water District, 2nd Flr., Zamboanga City, upon their submission of letter of intent and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P1,500.00) to the Zamboanga City Water District Cashier. Submission and results of eligibility shall be on the same office.

Bid documents will be available only to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Fifteen Thousand Pesos (P15,000.00) to the Zamboanga City Water District Cashier.

The Zamboanga City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or reimburse bidder for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

(Sgd.) ALEJO S. ROJAS, JR.
BAC Chairman

Manila set to top Guinness breastfeeding record

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MANY, GIT SET, NURSE!

Some 5,000 nursing mothers will gather in the City of Manila at Ya-Ka-Tuby to break the Guinness World Record on simultaneous breastfeeding.

The record-setting event will be held at the San Andres Sports Complex in Malate.

"The project is aimed at instilling the importance of breastfeeding as key to health benefits," Mayor Lito Atienza said in a statement.

The current world record for the most number of women who participated in simultaneous breastfeeding is held by the City of Berkeley Women Infants Children Program in California. The organization was able to gather 1,130 mothers on Aug. 1, 2002 to set a record.

According to World Health Organization Philippines, 16,000 Filipino children die each year because of bottle feeding while many others suffer from allergies and long-term illnesses such as juvenile hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and premature puberty "because of the formula milk industry."

Today's event will also emphasize the recommendation that children should be breastfed exclusively until they are six months old.

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIA Road corner Andrews Avenue, Pasay City, Metro Manila

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that Official Receipts Nos. 301851 - 301900 of the Manila International Airport Authority have been reported missing.

The public is therefore warned that any transaction entered into by anyone or any entity using these receipts will not be honored by this Office.

We advise the public to report to the MIAA authorities any person's or entity representing themselves as agents of this Office. Please call telephone numbers 8771109 loc. 3180 or 8771744 for this purpose.

(PDI - May 4, 2006)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Berlusconi resigns as Italian premier; Prodi to take over

ROME—PRIME MINISTER SILVIO Berlusconi formally handed in his resignation Tuesday after five turbulent years at the helm of Italian politics, paving the way for a new center-left government under Romano Prodi.

The flamboyant conservative leader submitted his resignation to President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi following last month's defeat to Prodi's coalition in the closest general election in living memory.

In a statement, Ciampi's office said Berlusconi "submitted his resignation from the government, its boards and had been asked by the president 'to carry on the urgent handle normal affairs.'"

The resignation of 69-year-old Berlusconi, Italy's longest-serving premier since World War II, now opens the way for the election of a new speaker of the chamber of deputies on a May 8 date for the election of the new president.

That decision will be made in a plenary session grouping the two chambers of parliament and representatives of the country's 20 regions.

In the meantime, Prodi has been outlining negotiations with his coalition—a fragile alliance stretching from communists to centrists—on the shape of his government.

The left-wing coalition's European Commission chief said he wanted to be ready with a lineup by Thursday or Friday this week in case Ciampi decided quickly to appoint him and ask him to form a government.

He has already selected most of his ministers and key government appointees except for the portfolios of interior and defense, according to reports.

If Ciampi leaves to his successor a decision on appointing Prodi, it would extend the uncertainty by at least another week, leaving Italy facing the kind of institutional stalemate that it can ill afford.

Berlusconi had initially refused to recognize the results of the April 9-10 election until it was validated by the courts.

But he was left with no choice but to quit after the new parliament elected members from Prodi's coalition as speakers of the lower and upper houses.

Nevertheless, Berlusconi—renowned for his sharp tongue, persistent legal woes, pro-American stance, domination of the media and colossal wealth—has openly declared his aim of toppling the new government. /AP

Goal of immigration protests still elusive

WASHINGTON—THE MASSIVE immigrant rights movement showed on Monday that it could build an organization, mobilize hundreds of thousands of people across the country and wield considerable power.

But the protesters do not appear to have achieved their primary goal—changing votes in Congress. And some critics say the demonstrations may have generated a backlash, hardening positions on Capitol Hill.

The protests, which began in March and resumed on Monday with a boycott of work, school and shops, have clearly grabbed the nation's attention where the issue of illegal immigration is high on the agenda in Washington.

The heightened attention will make it difficult for Congress to duck the question of what to do with the estimated 11 million to 12 million people living illegally in the United States.

Although the outpouring has drawn comparisons to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, questions remain about whether the protests can translate their passion into political results.

Some companies dosed on Monday put it in two-fold to assess the economic effects of the boycott. The efforts were disrupted because many workers notified their employers ahead of time that they planned to take the day off.

Some advocates who support "comprehensive immigration reform," the idea that illegal workers should be put on a path to citizenship, say the protests have given that concept an important lift in the debate on Capitol Hill.

New York Times Service

WORLD BRIEFS

Iran threatens Israel

TEHRAN—Iran threatened on Tuesday to attack Israel in response to any "error" by the United States and said it had enriched uranium to a level close to the minimum compatible with civilian use in power stations. The defiant statements were issued shortly before world powers met in Penticton on Sunday to plan their next moves after Tehran rejected a UN call to halt its uranium enrichment. "We have announced that whenever America does something evil, the first place that we target will be Israel," IRNA quoted a senior Revolutionary Guards commander, Rear Adm. Mohammad Ebrahim Dehqani, as saying on Tuesday. Hamas President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for the Jewish state to be "wiped off the map." Reuters

Top al-Qaida leader nabbed

KABUL—A top al-Qaida strategist with a $25 million bounty on his head and followers from Afghanistan to Europe has been captured in Pakistan, a US law enforcement official confirmed. Mustafa Setmariam Nasar, who once wrote a 1,600-page militant training book on ways to attack Islamic enemies, has been flown out of the country after being interrogated by Pakistani and American authorities, Pakistani officials told The Associated Press on Tuesday. They did not specify where he was taken. Terror analysts said Nasar's capture has dealt a blow to al-Qaida and other militant movements he called "Brothers in Arms" with "Western warfare and weapons training. We now realistic have reason to go to Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria and then the Islamic capitals." /AP

2 German hostages freed in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Two German hostages were released in Iraq after a three-month ordeal. Berlin announced that the two gas engineers, Rene Bruesewitz, 31, and Thomas Nitzschke, 38, had been freed after they were seized outside a refinery in northern Iraq on Jan. 14. German foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Wednesday he had spoken to the hostages' wives and that they were doing relatively well under the circumstances. The two were working for a German company when they were abducted, a few weeks after US journalist Jill Carroll was abducted in Baghdad. She was released on March 30. The kidnappers of the Germans, who said they were members of a group called Horse of Tawheed wal Jihad, followers of Abu al-Musab al-Zarqawi, a Sunnis militant leader killed in a US air strike in June 2006, issued several demands to the German government in the past three months. /AP

Kyrgyz gov't resigns en masse

BISHKEK—Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev refused Tuesday to accept the resignation en masse of the government, dismissing the move by the Central Asian republic's poor after a popular revolt. The attempt by all 16 members of the government to resign followed a critical vote in parliament last week. The resignations also came amid mounting street protests and fears of politically-inspired violence in the impoverished, strategically important Central Asian republic, which hosts bases for American and US military forces. "The entire government resigned. Just the president did not accept," Deputy Prime Minister Adakhan Madumarov said. His comments on state-run television could not be confirmed by the parliament's establishment-dominated chief. /AP

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

PURCHASE OF VARIOUS OFFICE SUPPLIES

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

PURCHASE OF VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION SUPPLIES

The WORLD

Edlor Lawrence R. Bueza

Armenian jet crashes off Russia; 113 killed

ADLER, RUSSIA—DIVERS SEARCHED STORM-CHURNED waters off Russia's Black Sea coast Wednesday, searching for the remains of 113 people who were killed when an Armenian passenger airliner crashed in rough weather as it was heading for a landing, emergency officials said.

It was the worst air disaster in Armenia's recent history.

Armenian airline officials said they believed the crash was due to the stormy weather, and Russian Emergency Situations Ministry spokesperson Viktor Beltsov said this was considered the likeliest cause. He said that the clouds were as low as 150 meters above the ground at the time of the crash.

Earlier, Russian officials said that the age of the aircraft and technical failure could have been involved. Investigators did not believe terrorism was at fault.

The Airbus A-320, which belonged to the Armenian airline Armavia, disappeared from radar screens just minutes from landing in Sochi, Beltsov said. Rescue officials in the ministry's southern regional branch said that 108 passengers and eight crew members aboard the plane flying from the Armenian capital Yerevan, including six children, were all killed.

At Sochi's airport, about 100 tearful relatives—nearly all Armenians—kept up an anguished vigil in a waiting hall. One man became hysterical and had to be taken away by ambulance.

Women, sobbing, held handkerchiefs to their mouths, while men sat silently, their heads in their hands.

Arsen Avagyan, 22, said he had seen articles on the ill-fated plane scheduled on landing in Sochi for a weeklong vacation. The city has a large ethnic Armenian population.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Armenian President Robert Kocharian declared Friday a day of mourning in both countries, the Interfax said.

Wreckage from the plane was found not far from the shoreline, Beltsov said, and Sergei Bakharev, the head of the southern district office of the Emergencies Situations Ministry, said the fuselage was found at a depth of 400 meters.

Search and rescue teams have pulled 10 bodies from the water, regional emergency officials said; some were wearing a life jacket, indicating they did not have sufficient warning to prepare for an emergency landing.

The airline said that 20 Russians, one Ukrainian and one Georgian were among the passengers. The rest were Armenian citizens.

Twenty-five boats as well as divers were involved in the search, and a drop-sea robot was to be used to try to recover the plane's black box, the Emergency Situations Ministry said. AP

RUSSIA CRASH

An Armenian aircraft carrying 113 people from Yerevan to the Russian resort of Sochi crashed into the Black Sea on Wednesday, officials said

2005 was deadliest year for journalists in a decade

PARIS—LAST YEAR WAS THE deadliest for journalists in a decade, with 63 reporters and five media aides killed, the French press freedom body Reporters Sans Frontieres (Reporters without Borders, RSF) said Tuesday.

Iraq accounted for 24 of the deaths.

An estimated 1,200 reporters were attacked or threatened, the organization said in its annual report, issued to mark the 10th International Press Freedom day on Wednesday.

Hot spots 1995, "when the Islamist Algerian groups were trying to attack everyone who did not back them," has the toll been as high, RSF said.

At his this year, 16 journalists and six media aides have been killed and 130 journalists and 56 cyber-dissidents are behind bars for having tried to do their job, RSF said.

It observed that almost a third of the world's population lives in countries where there is no press freedom.

In Africa, it said, "impunity took an unfortunate lawful, it is the rule," pointing to the unpunished murders of Norbert Zongo in 1998 in Burkina Faso and of Deyda Hydara in 2004 in Gambia.

"Stories also unsystematically expose the press without having to account to anyone at all," in, for example, Belarus, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

Latin America is also a "high risk zone", severe journalists and a media aide died there last year.

Cuba remains the world's largest jailer of journalists, second only to China. Colombia is in the grip of a 40-year-old civil war but Mexico overtook it last year as the most deadly country for the press on the continent.

In Peru and Haiti allaits and threats are commonplace. In the United States the principle of confidentiality of sources was "dramatically" called the jailing of Judith Miller, a reporter with the New York Times.

Asia is rife "with political factions," said RSF.

In Nepal, King Gyanendra established "all the ingredients limited that some heads of state entertain toward the freedom of the press" in North Korea, Burma and China.

In the years from the continent is also the land of democracy, with India filling the role of "beacon of press freedom."

Iraq was the most dangerous place to work, followed by the Philippines where seven journalists were killed.

Casualties also were located in the states of the former Soviet Union, in particular in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia and Uzbekistan.

The European Union, in particular Belgium, France, Italy and Poland, saw "a high number of searches and summons of journalists, ordered to hand over to the police the sources of their stories."

By contrast the new EU member states had made "spectacular progress" the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia are "havens of peace," as are the countries of northern Europe, RSF said.

In North Africa and the Middle East "the freedom and safety of journalists are severely tested," RSF said.

With 27 deaths, 24 of them in Iraq, the Middle East was the most dangerous region for the press. AFP

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SPORTS
Editor Teodoro S. Mercadejas

Early duel for UP-PAF, Air21

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DIVISIBILITY OF THE PHILIPPINES: Philippine air force and Air21 Aces are awaited separate rivals in semi-air bouts as their games in the women's division of the National Open softball championships yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Softball field.

UP-air Force Unidos of the World Open-ers found Manila Golden Girls, 5-0, while Air21-Aderson was ever impressive in a 7-0 thrashing of 2002 champ Rizal Technological University.

The two got wins when they clash today at 6:30 p.m. in what could be a preview of the finals.

Both teams have superior lineups and the one that can hit the ball could provide a glimpse of what will happen in the championships," said chief organizer Jose Guillermo of the Amateur Softball Association-Philippines.

Baseball Series, which is going to the Baltimore World Series in August, started the day with an 11-0 win of RFU for a 2-1 record.

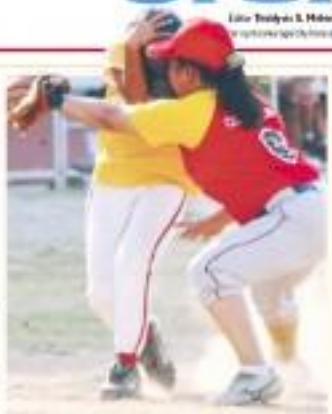
Manila continued its dashing for the Eddanzo-Big League division dugout, by posting a 10-4 victory over Laguna in case of date 2-2-1 over on the other hand.

Aztec, also gearing up for the World Series in Pittsburgh, dumped Balicuatro, 8-2, for its second straight win.

Over at the UP grounds, the Aces subdued its might on Balicuatro, 13-0, to take certain takeovers in the semis division with three victories.

In other meets action, Batangas downed Cebu City, 5-3, while Polytechnic University bombed Davao, 9-1.

The top four teams after the single-round elimination move into the Page System next round.



POLYTECHNIC'S Hanz Sanchez (left) cowers as she tries to beat the throw to third base, swamped by Balicuatro's Nina Bonnamaterra. EDDY ANGLAO

Torion stars as Realtors tame Tigers

By Hyung B. Castillo

IF NOT FOR THE CALL TO RETURN to the Philippine Basketball Association, Jimwell Torion would still be in his native Cebu, strutting his stuff in a local semi-professional tournament there.

Now the only Cebuano guard is making the most out of a rejuvenated career.

Torion came off the bench in the second half last night and figured in a list of key plays as his Lanka-licensed Cesafa Cola 99-90, to snap the Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdogs streak in the Grandslam for the Philippine Cup.

Flashed out of short retirement by the Lanka team that took a chance on the talented but temperamental cager, Torion scored 13 points, hauled down four boards and stole three steals to prop the Realtors to their third win in 11 games.

"We've done this not one, not two, but three times," coach Alfrancis Chua said. "This win is a big boost for us."

Chua also made special mention of Marlou Aquino, who has been battling injuries of late. The 6-foot-9 dominant scored 16 points in a massive role and pumped away two shots to join an elite club with more than 900 blocks.

Aquino joined Philip Cezar, Renato Pinero, Abet Guidaben, Jayvee Cuzbert and Rommel Pramonkin as the only players ever to reach that plateau.

Cezar Cola, which took a three-straight loss last month to start only a 4-8 card, had control until the end of the third period, 77-72.

But there was no stopping the Realtors once they went for the kill as 10--7 scoring of Ian Aquino leap made possible by a Torion-aided pass.

In the second game, Jeffrey Cariaso made the decision free throws as Alaska defeated Talk 'N Text, 92-89.

Ea scores

TSL LUCKY 99—Yabut 17, Aquino 16, Ocampo 12, Torion 13, Cezar 11, Limpot 10, Pinero 10, Guidaben 9, Gallinato 3, Quinto 0, Cuzbert 0, Pramonkin 0, Ilustre 0, Ilustre 0, Ilustre

Suns still shine in Phoenix

Ginobili, Duncan kick Spurs bid back to life

LOS ANGELES—ROBERT HORRY HAS A PLAYOFF career-high 23 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists and Steve Nash added 22 points as Phoenix rewarded to a 114-97 win over the Los Angeles Lakers in Game One of their opening round series.

All-Star Shawn Marion scored 21 points and Tim Thomas contributed 13 off the bench for Phoenix, which shot 48 percent (42-of-88) from the field and improved to 2-0 when it scores at least 100 points.

In San Antonio, Manu Ginobili and Tim Duncan could not wait to get back home and get back at the Sacramento Kings by posting a 109-99 win on Tuesday to take a 2-1 series lead.

Trailing the series, 3-2, the host will play Game Six in Los Angeles on Thursday and hope to return to Phoenix for Game Seven Saturday.

Leading, 39-31, one minute into the third period, Phoenix pulled away as Marion and Nash fueled back-to-back triples during a 17-3 surge.

The Suns built a 20-point edge, but Lakers star Kobe Bryant, who scored 29 points, capped an 11-2 burst with a 3-pointer to make it 96-75 with 10:17 remaining in the fourth period.

Trailing by 16 points with 7 1/2 minutes left, the Lakers got a little life when Bell received his second technical foul and was ejected for elbow-fouling Bryant to the floor.

"It makes me more than anything," Bryant said of Bell's heart foul.

Los Angeles pulled within 10-81 on baskets by Lamar Odom, but the Suns regrouped and built their edge back to 20 points behind a 13-8 run, which included back-to-back three-pointers by Leandro Barbosa and Marion.

In the other Mini-matchup, Ginobili scored 27 points and Duncan added 26 for San Antonio.

After averaging just 86.3 points in losing two straight games at Sacramento, the Spurs shot 57 percent from the floor.

San Antonio can eliminate Sacramento in Game Six in Sacramento on Friday.

Ginobili scored eight points in Game Three and just three in Game Four.

SEE on SPURS-Memphis on Game 6 set, No. 6 in relief

THINGS got too hot between the Suns' Raja Bell (right) and the Lakers' Kobe Bryant. Both players were ejected in the match, Bell right after the flagrant foul.

Heat, Nets grab 3-2 series leads

MIAMI—LWYANE WADE RETURNED from a nasty fall in Iconic fashion to spark the Miami Heat to a critical 92-79 victory over the Chicago Bulls in game five of their first-round playoff series.

Antoine Walker contributed 17 points and Rasaulle O'Neal 16 for Miami, which rebounded from road losses in the last two contests to take a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series.

The Heat can advance to the semifinal round with a victory in Chicago on Thursday.

"We needed this win tonight," said O'Neal, who added 14 rebounds and three blocks. "We want to try and close them out on Thursday."

In the other Eastern Conference game, Vince Carter scored 34 points and grabbed 13 rebounds as the New Jersey Nets posted a 92-86 win over Indiana in Game Five of their Eastern Conference first-round series.

Miami opened to the to where trouble as it trailed, 53-50, with less than six minutes remaining in the third quarter.

Wade was one of the game with a bruised hip that he sustained late in the second quarter and O'Neal was saddled with foul trouble.

CARTER. Another dominating performance.

"I got a shot and I knew the medicine would kick in," Wade said. "I sure am sure down by five and Shaq was hit with his fourth foul, and I said to the coaches that I was OK.

"I saw the opportunity at the moment to get in there right away and try to contribute. He was sending me out but I had to be out there."

Wade resumed the game with 6:00 left in the third period and promptly sparked the Heat on a 16-6 run over the next 10 minutes that totally changed the momentum of the game.

"Tonight we left a little bit of pressure and some Dwyane were down, it was a shock," Heat coach Pat Riley said. "We all got stunned, but we were able to weather the storm not knowing what was going to happen to him. Strange things happen when you think things are at their worst."

In New Jersey, Richard Jefferson scored 29 points, Jason Kidd added 19 and 11 rebounds and Jason Kidd dished out a postseason franchise-record 10 assists for New Jersey, which can advance to the conference semifinals with a win at Indiana in Thursday's Game Six.

After dropping two of the first three contests in this series, the Nets have bounced back with two straight victories largely due to Carter, who has poured in a total of 62 points in his last two outings.

AP

VICTORIAS

VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC.

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC., Victorias City, Negros Occidental wishes to invite interested bidders/contractors to pre-qualify and to bid for the supply of latest consumable materials, tools, equipment, supervision and technical expertise, and erection and complete commissioning of the **Factory Compressed Air Lines Renovation/Rehabilitation to Closed Loop System** based on Scope of Work and Supply covered by JB No. 054036 dated March 28, 2006 under CAPEX No. 056614-28-00-E. **THIS IS A TURNKEY PROJECT**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:

1. Compressed Air Line Closed Loop System
2. Installation of new pipings for compressed air systems, installation of new ancillaries and components for air filters at every loop
3. Installation of series of filters and components at the point of use in conformity with ISO 8573.1 standard and Good Engineering Practice Guide 219.

Interested bidders must submit the following pre-qualification requirements:

- Letter of intent with interest to Bid
- ISNC Accreditation papers for those who are not yet accredited
- Registered and in good standing with SEC or DTI
- Certificate of Registration with BIR
- Certificate of Membership with SSS, Philhealth, HDMF, Pag-ibig, etc.
- Certificate from Department of Labor and Employment
- Has a good track record and satisfactory performance as attested to by at least three (3) clients
- Latest Audited Financial Statements stamped by BIR and certified by a Certified Public Accountant

Bidding kits are available at the MCD Office and at Makati Office on **May 4 to May 11, 2006**, after payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00. Kindly submit the needed requirements on or before **May 16, 2006** for quality to bid. The pre-bidding conference will be held on **May 24, 2006**, at the VMC HRD Training Center at **2:30 P.M.** The commercial bidding will be announced thereafter.

For further inquiries, please contact **Messrs. Carlos D. Quizichon or Sen C. Labrador** at VMC Manila at telephone numbers (**632) 580-3696 to 97** and local **2301 or 2306**, and **Mr. Ernesto "Tony" Diggs** at VMC Makati Office at telephone numbers (**632)890-8481** and (**632)890-7981**. Also visit our website www.victoriasmilling.com and e-mail us at mcd@victoriasmilling.com

Victorias Milling Company, Inc., reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any required/formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Company. The Company assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss that they may incur in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **TERESITA V. ILAGAN**
Chairperson, Special Bidding Committee

(PD) May 4, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines

METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS AND SEWERAGE SYSTEM CORPORATE OFFICE

INVITATION TO BID

(Re-bidding)

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), through its Bid and Awards Committee (BAC), will conduct a public bidding for the pre-qualification and disposal of the following surplus materials and various undocumentable equipment and furniture, as are on exhibit for their prospective bidders' perusal at the Port area (Manila), Metro Manila and at the MWSS Property Management Storage, Balara, Quezon City. These materials are composed of the following:

Item No.	Materials Description	Location	Approximate Quantity	MWSS Base Price
1	Surplus unused materials composed of different kinds of pipes and fittings	San Jose Storage Area, San Juan, M.M.	2,000.00 lots	P1.0 million
2	Heavy Duty Truck	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	10,000 Units	P1.5 million
3	Air-Cooled Scrap Metals (Trees)	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	2,000 Units	P1 million
4	Surplus Welded Materials (Steel)	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	500 Units	P50 million
5	Aluminum Metal	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	500 Units	P50 million
6	Scrap Metal (Steel Cylinder)	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	1,000 Units	P100 million
7	Undocumentable Computers, Printers, Xerox Machines, Telephone Instruments, Office Equipment and Accessories	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	1,000 Units	P5 million
8	Scrap/Waste Asphaltic Plastics	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	5,000 Units	P2 million
9	White Scrap/Waste undocumentable materials (GI, C.I.) (6" x 6m.)	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	1 lot	P50,000.00 (1 lot)
10	Office Chairs, Tables, Cabinets, and other Furniture	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	1 lot	P10,000.00 (1 lot)
11	Old Electrical Cable & PVC Conduits	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	500 Units	P100,000.00

Interested parties may secure the Terms of Reference (TOR) and the Bid Form from the MWSS Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) located at the address below upon payment of non-refundable amount of Php1,000.00 starting May 10, until May 12, 2006.

Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Engineering & Project Management Department
Ground Floor, MWSS Corporate Office
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City
Telefax: (632) 9205-0001 / 924-0446

The bids must be submitted to the BAC in sealed envelopes, one (1) original and two (2) duplicate copies, on or before **10:00 a.m. of May 23, 2006**. The bids will be opened in the above address and date above as the basis for the official time for the bidding. Bids received after the above deadline shall no longer be accepted. The bids will be opened by the BAC at 2:00 p.m. on the same date in the presence of one (1) bidder, or their duly authorized representatives who may opt to attend.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be conducted at the above address, at **10:00 a.m. on May 17, 2006**, and bidders are also invited to attend.

(Sgd.) **ORLANDO C. ENDRINAL**
Administrator

Swing Ford

FORD NATIONAL TEAM SHOOTOUT 2006

Get your foursome together! Show your smooth strokes and swing your way to an all-expense paid golf holiday to Spring City Golf and Leisure Resort in Kunming, China.

For details visit www.fedgolf.ph or contact your Federation Golf Club

Pharmaton Alfacure Citibank

Satellite Eliminations

Grand Finals

Cebu hosts Ford Vis/Min Shootout Satellite tourney

LUIS ANO ROBERTO CONCHELLA, JESSE SIGOS AND Allen Minano established for a cut score of 36 to win the Negros Occidental Golf Club elimination for the Ford National Team Shootout recently.

Over at Bulo Golf Club, the foursomes of Franklin Lozano, Tony Rosales, Roger Rosales and William Cuello emerged the top qualifier with a net score of 59.

The two champion foursomes and the four squads that finished behind them advance to the Visayas/Mindanao Satellite finals along with other qualifiers from Pueblo de Oro Golf & Country Club, Alta Vista Golf Club, Fairways & Bluewater Golf and Country Club and Cebu Country Club.

The Visayas/Mindanao Satellite finals is scheduled tomorrow at the Cebu Country Club.

The other qualifiers from NEGO were Jose Jun-le Yong, Al Hyunbil, Yoichi Lopez and Anthony Ramos (net 59); Jimmy and Ramon Yuson, Luigi Benedicto, and Joe Mari Limjap (60); Lee and Herman Castillo Jr., Roberto Gobrey, and Daniel Tocmo (60); Epifanio Yano, Ramon Montano, Juan Carlos Yano and dr. Tanpioco (61).

Completing the Iloilo qualifying cast were Butch Amorito, Joel Naranjo, Edwin Delicana and Silito Alcaraz (net 59); Dodo Cua, Ferrante Spinler, Raoul Cuenco and Ian Gonzales (60); Dr. Rufino Hipe Jando, Maggie and Mark Alonso (61); Ed Tee, Steve Jandoleza, Johnny Young and Edmund Lacuna (61).

The top three teams from the Satellite finals will compete in the Grand Finals on May 20 and 21 at Orchard Golf and Country Club and Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club along with their counterparts from Luzon.

The winning foursome will be entitled to an all-expenses paid golf vacation to Spring City Resort in Kunming, China.

The Ford National Team Shootout is presented by Real Grocery Philippines, Spring Magazine, and the Philippine Association of Golf Clubs Inc. (PAGCOM)—the country's largest organization of private golf clubs. For more details, call the PAGCOM office at (02) 846-3951 or visit www.pagcom.ph.

VANIAL celebrates after holing out.

Longshot VGC pro Vanial tops RP Open qualifying

CLUB PRO VIC VANIAL SHOT A SECOND STRAIGHT 3-UNDER-PAR 73 yesterday to top the Philippine Open qualifier event on their second home made the grade at the close of the 36-hole tournament at Villamor Golf Club.

Vanial, in fourth spot at the start of the round, dropped three strokes on the first five holes but played steadily the rest there to salvage a +1 for the card.

With a 139 aggregate, Vanial secured nine others into the Philippine Open slated May 25-28 at Wack Wack where 27 other Filipino pro play four members of the national pool and two sponsors' invitees of the National Golf Association of the Philippines have been awarded.

Veteran Jimi Relkoy carded a 74 to place second at 141 while Orlando Jimeno shot a 75 and finished fourth third at 142 with Jun Cerda, who fumbled with a 76.

Other 142 scorers were amateurs Jon Bersola, the former national amateur and ISM, Amateur Open champion, with 68 points while Patrick Yangco added 33. Veteran Nilo Marquez paced third with 65.33.

In the other game, Hagi's Rolando Sandoval (Limbaliya Filipe Hugo, 73-67, to overcome in gain at least a tie for the second finish seat.

The top two teams after the three-hole playoff eliminations will dispute the title in a winner-take-all game.

The scores:

Spring 100—Rolando 70, Yangco 33, Jimeno 68, Jun 69, Ilan 69, Bayot 3, Manuel 69, Jimeno 6, Cardino 3, Cerda 3, Jimeno 4, Ilan 2, Verdad 4.

Daniel's Legacy 99—Marquez 27, Aquino 67, Cayanga 42, Manuel, Jimeno 68, Ilan 6, Verdad 4, Bayot 3, Jimeno 6.

Scores: 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

Spring Oil cagers gain PICAA finals

DEFENDING CHAMPION SPRING Cooking Oil extended one big scoring spurt in the third quarter to beat Hoover's Coppers, 100-89, and clinch the first finals berth in the 2006 PAGAA Open basketball tournament Tuesday at the GAC gym in Manila.

Led by Adelio Misamis, the Cooking Oil blasters of national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and coach Hector "Yong" Garcia ripped the contest wide open in the third by outscoring Hoover's 27-17.

It was this seventh straight win for the Cooking Oil blasters in the tourney supported by Manila Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna, Chino Lightings and Tomato Cafe Chapman.

Misamis supported by Spring with 30 points while Patrick Yangco added 33. Veteran Nilo Marquez paced third with 65.33.

In the other game, Hagi's Rolando Sandoval (Limbaliya Filipe Hugo, 73-67, to overcome in gain at least a tie for the second finish seat.

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Daniel's Legacy 99—Marquez 27, Aquino 67, Cayanga 42, Manuel, Jimeno 68, Ilan 6, Verdad 4, Bayot 3, Jimeno 6.

Scores: 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

SPORTSWATCH

Delouda gets crack at WBC int'l title

PHILIPPINE NO. 2 FLYWEIGHT CHEETER DELOUDA WILL SEEK THE VACANT WBC international lightweight title on May 21 against Ali Funeka in East London, South Africa. Delouda's manager Fritz "Whitner" Siklot said the fight clinched the title rematch due to his great fight recorded 13-7 with 10 KOs. Delouda moved to the Philippine lightweight title, but was dropped by champ Fernando Montiel's last November in the fourth round. Funeka, a light-hearted banger ranked WBC No. 10, is a strong puncher with only one loss in 17 fights. **John Lapuyan Contributor**

RP junior Cuppers nip HK

KUCHING, MALAYSIA—PHILIPPINE JUNIOR CAGERS EDGED HONG KONG 71-70 to clinch victory as the sixth seeded Philippines banned Hong Kong, 2-1, Wednesday at the start of the 2006 Fortune Junior Cup Asia-Oceania qualifying tournament at the Samarahan Learn Needs Association courts. Obvious marks up for his team, 16-2 defensive rebound, scored 16 points and grabbed 11 rebounds. Jose Jr. playing in his first international tournament, worked behind a solid frontcourt as they whipped the banded of Ryan Cheung and Darren Ng, 0-3, 0-4. Jackson showed he is a contender of the 2006 World Juniors Championships, gave the Philippines a 1-0 lead with a 6-7 (8), 1-6, 0-4 victory over the US team Cheung in the first game.

Princess, Pisen ruin duckpin tilt

TWO-TIME PBA MAVERICK PEARL PRINCESS OF CEBU PISEN'S VERSATILITY WILL later be on the women's Master women in the 32nd Grand and Elite National Youth duckpin bowling championships held at the Marketplace in Alabang City, Philippines. Philippine Duckpin Bowling Federation (PDBF) president Cesar Montano announced that the lead day to join the duckpin is on Saturday. Entries must be submitted tomorrow from 2-8 p.m. Entry fee is P75, 000. Three more prominent bowlers posted perfect scores of Three events last Tuesday. San Mateo is a Master Class High Bantams. Follow the original of Bukidnon (Don Rubert LAP Farms) and Sam Calderon (SK Tamaraw).

Makati Saipukan resumes today

THE HUNT FOR THE TWO-POINTING PRIZE OF PBA MVP BOOKENDER ON Makati Saipukan's Summer Saipukan 6-team derby which enters its fourth round today. Some 15 fights are on lay beginning 4:15 p.m. Promoters Ed Ocampo, Noah Tolentino and William Co all PBA Superstars and Commissioner Cup contenders as reserved division assistance, tabbed in the Red Horse games of the new 8-game Masters formula to score 400 game. San Pascual Baptist City did his time and teammate Jaime Cruz of Hotel Youth proved by taking the team's Masters competition with 9 strikes.

27 entries lead Religon Tukaan

ANOTHER HUGE CROWD IS EXPECTED AT THE HUGOS SEAT ARCHERY FESTIVAL called Religon Mega Cockpit today as the Tukaan 3-week derby opens at 8 a.m. with the third day of eliminations. Twelve more participants tallied two nine mark Tuesday night, bringing to 27 the number of qualifiers with perfect scores. With two weeks left Pepe Palmos of Tukaan, Cesar Mayo of Mandaluyong, Engr. Ramon Calderon SR, Helen Dandy of Metro Pepe Makati, Louie De (SEEK Club), Lee Blanquet (Baguio Senate), Evelio Bernardo (Tanauan), Edilberto Jr. Jacinto (GDC), Raul Ilaan (San Mateo Archery), Jerry Palmares (Boo Triangle), Tony Sy-Ong (Sky Rays and Roy Soriano (GDC) also and Tony.

Villarino shines in archery

AS 40 MEN AND 60 WOMEN SLAVE IT OUT AT THE 10,000-SEAT ARCHERY FESTIVAL called Religon Mega Cockpit today as the Tukaan 3-week derby opens at 8 a.m. with the third day of eliminations. Twelve more participants tallied two nine mark Tuesday night, bringing to 27 the number of qualifiers with perfect scores. With two weeks left Pepe Palmos of Tukaan, Cesar Mayo of Mandaluyong, Engr. Ramon Calderon SR, Helen Dandy of Metro Pepe Makati, Louie De (SEEK Club), Lee Blanquet (Baguio Senate), Evelio Bernardo (Tanauan), Edilberto Jr. Jacinto (GDC), Raul Ilaan (San Mateo Archery), Jerry Palmares (Boo Triangle), Tony Sy-Ong (Sky Rays and Roy Soriano (GDC) also and Tony.

GOLD medalist Franz Mikhael Villarino (center) displays his form, together with Gabby Moreno (left) and Wilve Zuasongco.

Momentum vs memento

THE LAKERS RUN TO SIX STRAIGHT VICTORIES TO eliminate the Suns yesterday.

Sic, Rosary

It was the other way around.

The Suns, speeding again with their MVP at the helm, the "Speed" Nash, blew the Lakers out of the 3D Airwest Center in Phoenix by storming for the one-round-six they committed in the last three games—score below 100.

So, the victory did not come the Lakers. The Suns need two more of their road victories, the Lakers must win four. If you ask Jack Nicholson, that would come within the next 96 hours, or even earlier.

Phoenix scored below 100 in losing in last three games, one in Phoenix and two in Los Angeles. For yesterday, the Suns were surely back on the business in the NBA playoffs' first round.

In 10 deep minutes, the veteran Nash, after up, endlessly moved themselves and regained their scoring title to bomb the Lakers with a 114-97 victory and narrowed the Lakers' lead to 3-2.

The game wasn't only extremely physical, it also was chosen down the spine of coach Phil Jackson, who warned his lakers to play desperate but skilled.

"That's what happens when teams play with extra desperation," said Jackson. "They [the Suns] were active and aggressive and beat us with the nature of their play."

The Suns outrand rebounds and gunners, down double figures from the six men, their time led scoring with 20, Nash had 22 and Shawn Marion 20-23.

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

Suddenly, the Suns recovered their Game 1 victory when they scored 107 against the Lakers' 102.

The referees threw out the Suns' shot seven days ago—to a headlock foul that floored Nash. Bryant made 7-13 field by the fourth.

But rather than fold, the Suns erupted with an 80 blast to put their lead to 10 down the stretch, limiting Game 6 on Friday (Thursday in L.A.) a battle between a tenor with unassailable momentum and a team with no backbone.

Definitely, the Suns, with new-found strength and a new team on life, will be more than inspired gunning for the repeated tenacious against the Lakers, who will be hounded by a brutal assault charge labeled on Kwame Brown not rendered.

The game wasn't only physical, it was also "verbal."

With 3:11 to play, Bryant, saddled with one technical foul earlier skirmish with Bell, also got himself ejected after tagging a referee's call in a play that did not involve him but Brown, the lumbering giant with arms only for rebounds.

The several assault-and-battery gave an advantage to Los Angeles but overcome at Jackson.

"We will not talk about it," Jackson said of the case before yesterday's game. "As a basketball team, we're going to focus on what we need to do. I did my misbehaving in Sweden. We have seven preventive basketball, basketball, and have. 9."

The Sweden case showed its ill effects yesterday.

Brown played only 14 minutes, 10 before his second quarter, and was foul-plagued, getting 3 with 11:11 remaining in the first quarter. Although he made all 6 of his shots, he played mostly tentative and had only 3 rebounds.

Lamar incessantly hit the Los Angeles game, the Lakers always sought supplying when Nash made forwards. Smush Parker was 1-of-7 for five points, completely a far cry from his brethren in the 4 when he his defensive produced game-winning steals for the Lakers.

They seemed not ready to play yesterday Lakers' tantamount. 14.

"We need to calm down," said Luke Walton, whom jump ball with Nash with 6.1 seconds left in Game 4's overtime fueled Bryant's 17-foot game-winner of the Suns.

Calmedown they must. One win in two games left a tall order.

It is still Phoenix that's on the edge. To complete its rise from the ashes of its 2-1 ruins, it needs to sweep the last two games.

That, I must say, is a push called Mt. Everest.

(Comments to mendoza@abkbd.net

Macaya, Tojino take top honors in Riviera Invt'l; 2 score aces

BEGI MACAYA AND LARRY TOJINO BLOCKED THE tough playing conditions with 119 points to bag the overall crowns in the eighth Riviera Golf Club Inclusions-Amateur tournament golf tournament recently in Silang, Cavite.

The two handicappers from the Class A division came to first as Manuel Valdez and his guest partner Gerardo Go settled for the division title after losing to Macaya and Tojino by just a point for the top award.

Raymund Rangel picked up another low gross award, this time teaming up with Arnulfo Reyes for 98 points.

Kenny Ignacio and Jesse Hernandez emerged the Class B champions and the guest of Alberto Montano. Mario Bagtard the Class C place.

Two aces were recorded, the first on Day 1 on his very first hole—the 178-yd Couples—by Kenny Ignacio, and the second on Day 4—the 138m of Langer—by Sotero Gonzaga. They shared a fixed bonus put up by host Alta Tuason and each won a trip to the US via Asiana Airlines.

Dominico Pimentel didn't need a lucky shot to win the other Fixed Prize. His name was picked in the selection of the one to win grand raffle that capped the two-day competitions which had future Commissioners as promoters. Minanes, Pagcor, Bel Spores, Tompalo Bay, Gaza Cebu and Johnnies were the other sponsors.

Ignacio and Bautanilla scored 11 Hoverin hymns over Stephen Tan-Pool Garcia with Florian Concepcion-Dulce Mariona playing Bel-Air '209.

The results:

Overall champion—1 Gilda Macaya-Larry Tojino, Jose Gerry 98; Raymund Rangel-Jesse Reyes

Class A—1 E. Manuel Valdez-Gerardo Go, 102; Reynaldo Alcaraz-Alexander Sandoval, 103; Greg Kalaw-Alexander Agustin, 104

Class B—1 Kenny Ignacio-Jesse Hernandez, 112; Stephen Tan-Fred Garcia, 108; Antonio Concepcion-Rafael Bautista

Class C—1 Edilberto Alano-Ellenita Alano, 114; Peter Cuenco-Jerry Bautista, 115; Ramon Gonzaga-Jose Ramos

POSTBOT — BY BILL AMEND

A LUPIN — BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN — BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY — BY PAL JUNIOR

BIG BY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

HUTTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

ATOMIC MEDI WEEDY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PANALIGAN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a wonderful combination of practicality, sensitivity and warm charm. You're hardworking and ambitious. Others see you as conscientious and reliable. You're quick to understand the others you. Marriage, partnership and contributions are important. At the age of 11, you become far more conscious about this. Your possible area of life is best years of your long-term habit.

Birthdays of: Audrey Hepburn, actress; Alice Cashbach, actress; Randi Travis, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're pace and sensible terms should be the order today. Take responsibility for things now will be useful and assuring. You will be rewarded for all this painstaking work. Yay!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might be feeling a little bit confused today. Take responsibility for things now will be useful and assuring. You will be rewarded for all this painstaking work. Yay!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a great day at work for you. It's a powerful one day to start projects or to ask for favors. Co-workers are helpful and supportive. Pleasant surprises await you. Good news about your health might please you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Getting things done and new initiatives could knock you off your feet today. Accept a crowded environment. This is a wonderful day for parties and creative activities. Enjoy!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're amazing at home today. All real estate deals can be very profitable. Enjoy something romantic and lofty.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're full of energy today. Life is good. Expect to meet new people who inspire you in some way. On the whole, this is the day for pleasant surprises.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a wonderful day for business and romance. There's money in them the hey. You might receive a raise as well. Expect money to good job.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is an awesome business day for you! All kinds of unexpected, beneficial opportunities can come to you. Be open to meeting personal folks positive and friendly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Opportunities abound for you today. Be open to new, hopeful, romantic prospects. Chances. You maybe anything can happen... avoid extravagant.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're optimistic you today. By all means, accept invitations. This is a great day to network with others. Expect a group. Communicate with others and cooperating.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can really make a wonderful impression on others today. Business might give you a raise—certainly praise. Look your best. Expect a miracle.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Subtle—or not so subtle—romance is in the air today. Love could come your way now. Your emotional stability is small—so quick to really jump when something pressures you. The people to pursue and associate with are key.

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Joel P. Eisenberg
Huntington Beach, CA

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

HIBIKOSHIS — BY JOHNIE TEJOO

BEH — BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE — BY HANS ABRERA

LOVEWORTS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

TULDOK — BY RAFLAND "BEYUM" MUMBRING

ENTERTAINMENT

Celso Ermino G. Velarde

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

Meet the other 'Big Brother'

Resident counselor discusses the perks, perils of teen life in 'PBB' house

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

MARIDY DIONG "Teens are insecure and impulsive," she says.

WHEN THE TEEN Edition of ABS-CBN's "Pinoy Big Brother" series was first announced, parents and other media critics were quick to express concern.

Are teenagers equipped to handle the pressures of isolation in the new famous house on Hidden Ignacio Avenue?

Dr. Randy Dellosa, "PBB" resident psychologist, said he did this, and more, with Ateneo Interviewers.

"Teens are insecure and impulsive. They may not always know how to control this. They may also go overboard in testing the limits. It possible outcome are love affairs that may not end well," Dellosa said.

Another vital issue is sexuality, he pointed out. "Teenagers with raging hormones may find a need to explore this."

But he is not that worried about the housemates, Dellosa said. "I'm more concerned about the teen viewers. They look up to the housemates as role models. What if the housemates commit suicide? We can't really prevent exploratory behavior, but [since it's on TV], teen viewers might think it's acceptable."

He said the housemates are well-protected. "Big Brother and the whole staff are watching 'em on call 24-7."

After his five "counseling sessions" with them just hours before this interview, he offered that observation. "Individually and as a group, they are keen on exploring, but they are also very cautious. They are aware that negative behavior would merit some form of consequence from Big Brother and the voting public."

The teen housemates seemed to have learned from the experiences of the show's two previous editions, the counselor said. "Some have picked up some pointers on do and what not to. There's a greater fear of [censure]."

There's "balance" in the house right now, he said. "Big Brother picks personalities that are wild and unique. With that mental batch, the boys are more outgoing and relaxed—[so even those] quiet ones open up. The girls are more conflicted in their life stories, more emotionally considerate."

One, Jenelle Obispo is an avowed lesbian who once worked as a model and GRO in a bar.

"Ellie has had a history of anorexia nervosa," Dellosa added. "That's a fairly

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First 'Idol' auditions set June 3

By Marinel R. Cruz

"PHILIPPINE IDOL" HOPEFULS HAS BEEN be ready with audition pieces on June 3.

This is according to ABC 5, which announced on Tuesday that the first of three Manila auditions to vet on June 3. The network has acquired the franchise for the phenomenally popular reality talent search from FremantleMedia.

The venues will be announced later.

Tryouts for the Visayas and Mindanao regions will be in Cebu and Davao, respectively, said Tess Dalisay, ABC 5 senior vice president for corporate affairs.

Checklist

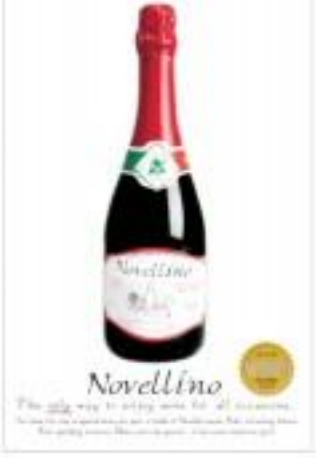
Four more auditions will be held as satellite offices in SM Malls in key cities.

According to a checklist that ABC 5 sent to Inquirer Entertainment, contestants should be at least 18 but not more than 28 years old on the day of the audition.

He or she must be a Filipino citizen or a bearer of dual citizenship, one of which is Philippines.

In case a contestant has dual citizenship,

PAGE A2.3



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Clarissa King, Model

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2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	7 SILENT HILL
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	8 SLITHER
4 THE WILD	9 THE SENTINEL
5 AQUAMARINE	10 PAMAHIN

ERMITA

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	
2 SLITHER	5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 THE SENTINEL	6 THE WILD WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 SILENT HILL	7 AQUAMARINE

METRO EAST

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	6 THE WILD
3 SLITHER	7 THE SENTINEL
4 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS	8 SILENT HILL

NOVALICHES

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	4 THE SENTINEL
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	5 SILENT HILL
3 SLITHER	6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

CITISQUARE MALABON — PIONEER

1 PAMAHIN	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 AQUAMARINE
3 RESERVE	3 SILENT HILL
4 RESERVE	4 THE WILD

STA. ROSA — LIPA

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2	2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 HANNY MOYHEE	3 THE WILD
4 THE SENTINEL	4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
	5 TIGER BLADE

DASMARIÑAS — ANGELES

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 AMERICAN SOLDIERS	2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 SLITHER	3 SLITHER
4 SHE'S THE MAN	4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

IMUS — STARMILLS

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 AMERICAN SOLDIERS	2 SLITHER
3 SILENT HILL	3 GRANDMA'S BOY
4 SLITHER	4 NORTH COUNTRY
	5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
	6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

BACOLOD — ILOILO

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 THE WILD	3 THE WILD
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3	4 TIGER BLADE
5 JUST FRIENDS	5 SILENT HILL
6 BASIC INSTINCT 2	6 GRANDMA'S BOY

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THE BIGGEST ACTION MOVIE OF THE YEAR
NOW SHOWING
2 DAYS BEFORE U.S. PLAYDATE
RECEIVING ACTION AND EXCITEMENT AT SM CINEMA

A2

First 'Idol' ...

From page A2

...by the most present the original and two certified true copies of his/her Philippine passport.

...Ma'am should be prepared to sing two songs from the official song list found on the "Philippine Idol" website. ... everything provided over.

...On audition day, a contestant must submit a completed "Philippine Idol" application form and two photos (one full-body shot or at least 3R-sized, and one close-up or at least passport size).

...If a contestant is under 18, a parent or legal guardian must sign the application form.

...The contestant should submit the original and two certified true copies of birth certificate and two kinds of ID (i.e., passport, driver's license, SSS/GSIS, school or company ID).

Judges, hosts

...A press conference to officially introduce the RP "Idol" judges and hosts is set on May 24, Online said.

...Manolo Ryan Cayabyab is the first judge to be confirmed. A teammate, Ryan Agoncillo, is one of two hosts.

..."During the press con, we will choose from among the members of the entertainment media our 'Press Idol,'" said Online.

Meet the other ...

From page A2

...large and self-esteem problem. Alfdel Amorlan's completion to stand out in a crowd. But that's a reaction to people who try to beat her to."

...The biggest reason was when high school valedictorian Alfdel Garbellon drew voluntary wisdom after only seven days in the house.

...Alfdel had scrounged Indi Big Brother and Online before he left. "We started like two days before I left. ... really decided," the counselor said.

...Online is available for counseling Tuesday mornings, 10a for Alfdel. Online had to talk special house talks.)

...Alfdel lost on "relationship" problem, he said, which happens "when a person, faced with a serious, then and have some waning motivation to deal with it."

IQ is not EQ

...Among Alfdel's sessions was home sickness. She missed her mother. When a person feels isolated in a group, insecurities and issues emerge."

...Online opined that if there's any lesson from Alfdel's experience, it's that "IQ doesn't necessarily mean EQ or Social Quotient. You may be smart, but dealing with other people and dealing with your own emotions are another matter altogether. his way in the house would hopefully teach him to develop emotional and relational skills."

...Online said Alfdel is now doing well and will be ready to face the public in a few days.

..."If he does not, it does," Online quipped.

Hot and happening at 42 (a naughty chat with Zsa Zsa Padilla)

From page A1-4

thank-you story. It's really one for the books!

"His house was one of my mom's closest friends. She even told my mom more than she wrote me in write her biography. I felt...brother and said, 'Oh, as long as you pay me per word.'"

In many ways, The Divas reminds me of my mom, both of them seem intimidating but they soften up when hit to the right spot. Mothers don't want just to be heard but to be really listened to. Now that my mom's gone, I miss her anyway in a way I never thought I would. Maybe when the mom in The Divas and Carol passed, they reflected and reached each other a little more.

I texted Albert for his reaction to Vhong's explosive statements. He texted back: "We decided to just let it pass. We need to close our career. It's been going on since time immemorial. We don't want to talk about it anymore not only for us but more for our kids. It doesn't matter what people think. What matters is God knows the truth."

Finally, in kindly The Divas, Carol and Al have decided just keep on living as an Avel will stop hunting. And before they know it, an descending will come somewhere along the way.

Ate Vi's advice

From page A1-4

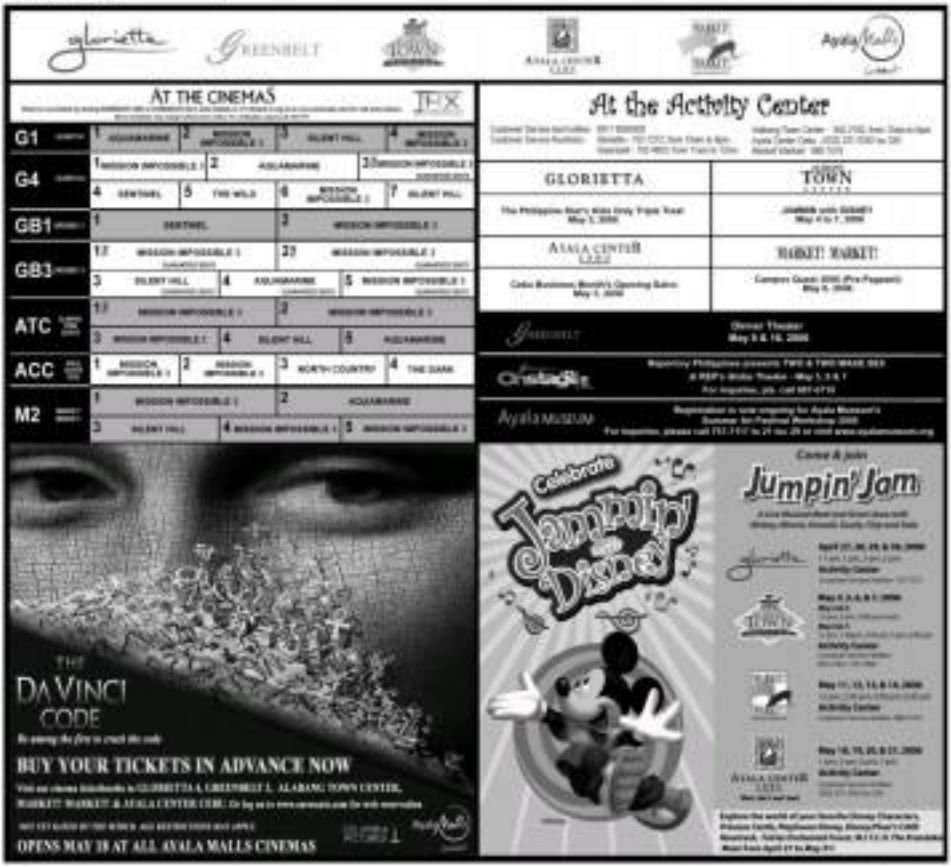
died about two years ago, "I was told before she died," said Vilma. "I would attend activities at the special schools to [see that the attended]."

Vilma was not in the country when April died. "I learned only when Inday delivered a speech about starting a theater—named after April. She talked about her true friend I saw only her strength."

The last time of Daisy's speech career, Vilma, per one she, the children are called orphans. What do people call a mother who has lost her child?" "Some have use to the rare gun episode of 'Mulk,' directed by Olbi Gutierrez.

"Kahit nagmumur like this, I still get excited [as an actress]," said Vilma. "It's in the blood—even if I am already a public servant (three-term mayor of Lipa City)."

She has no intention of forthcoming her political career—yet. "I've been asked to run for governor or congressman," she said. "For I have no immediate plans. My losing as mayor was during My being an actress was also during. I know there's something else I'm also destined to be."



Hot and happening at 42

ZSA ZSA swears a blonde when sleeping.

ZSA ZSA HADDID (NOW TURNS 42 THIS month) joins the Hollywood trend of being hot and happening, as 40 indeed becomes the new 30. Doesn't she kinda remind you of Uma Thurman?

For Zsa Zsa, it all boils down to healthy eating habits, regular exercise and of course Dr. Hebi Jacinto's "Midas touch." Hooks is another spy to eliminate stubborn fat she could not exercise away, and Peanut and Thermage to tighten her abdominal skin and improve stretch marks. Zsa Zsa flaunts a physique unmatched by age.

"Just like her, I will be 42 soon. But why look my age if I refuse to even act my age? Imbento! Get macho Bebo. I somehow maintain my "mother wiloo." Dr. Hebi has only given a whole new meaning to the saying "Life begins at 40" and how! Without feeling 40, Zsa and I enjoyed some girl talk.

Has your youthful body enhanced intimate encounters with Tito Boipits?

No, would be an understatement! I sleep with a blonde so that my smoothie. He knows the cue (giggles). I have also become more comfy with myself. I hope women who are pushing 40 out there will snap out of the mindset no pay 40 do so it's mid-life crisis time.

What was his reaction to your sizzling billboard on Edsa?

He's used to me changing my look every so often. Waking from a 10-year coma. Even I came home with a different hair color, he just said "Nalo lo ang firefighter tayong gusto?"

Don't you think you're sexier than your daughter Kazelle?

Kazelle has her own charm. All women go through certain phases in their lives before they can emote a certain mystique. Wait till Kazelle reaches her prime!

What's the secret of your ongoing power?

Not all singers are given a chance to act. I'm lucky I was able to cross over. I was sure of purpose for acting, that I will always go back to singing.

Will your new body fit into a bridal gown?

Always!

Sad for Liez!

I am sad that Tita Nova (Amalia Fuentes) is on the one-path again versus Albert and Liezl Martinez. She says that the couple should stop making it a soap-opera like gore down a hard, slow when they were starting in the 60.

I was a bridesmaid at the Martinezes' wedding and always in their videos, Alpacino. From Day 1 when they eloped, I was privy to their turbulent

PAGE A2-3

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

WILMA Santos: "Pay your taxes, kids. Learn from my experience."

Ate Vi's advice

By Mel Valera

YOUNG STAR AWARD take care of their finances and pay their taxes.

The advice came from Vilma Santos, whose name came home by the figures of financial freedom in the 90s. It cost a pretty penny.

"I have happened again since? When I withdrawn from business last week. "But I know what [other stars] are going through right now—20, not even. When you're young, somebody else handles your money. When you start having problems, then you start wondering what happened to your earnings."

The vacation herself hadn't to have recovered from the tax audit case if her marriage to Edu Manzano suffered from it.

"Edu wanted me to be Edu. Hindi ako, to be true from those lot. But I had to work and pay my debts. I was vilified and persecuted. Not everybody is so lucky."

Surprised

"Vilma was surprised to learn that Luis, her son by Edu, paid a bigger income tax than she did this year.

"For the first time in my life, I felt insecure," Vilma said, laughing. "Luis was earning more—I told myself, this couldn't happen. But it's happening."

She described Luis as a good person who seems to enjoy life. "[Andy] the girls! I know my son, he's definitely no longer a virgin. But I still don't want him to get married and make me a grandmother," Vilma admitted. "He just turned 20!"

Check Vi!

On screen, when making a TV comeback tonight in a special one-part episode of "Maalaala Mo Kaya"—new sobbing by Fe 15th anniversary—rehearsal that today's young stars are all talented.

"Just beautiful," she gushed. "They can memorize, sing, they can do anything. But the problem there is, it's hard to stand out. During my time, it was a movie, one with Nora [Aunor] and me."

What more does she want to achieve?

"Follow-in-down like Lauren Guillen or Marian Rivera," she declared. Other than this, she's content.

Her line "SAKIT" wins. Vilma said she liked the positive story. "They have been asking me to do an episode for the longest time, but we couldn't agree on the script. I found this story of Daisy Hernandez touching.

Tonight's story revolves around Judy's relationship with her special child (girl, who

WHAT'S INSIDE

Pre-need sales down 28% /B6

Cut in oil import tariff seen /B12

BUSINESS

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Finance rejects tax relief for workers

FILIPINO jobseekers register during a two-day job fair offering more than 30,000 jobs in suburban Manila on Wednesday. The Philippines has a chronic unemployment problem, with nearly 3 million (about 9%) Filipinos and millions more complaining of being underemployed. (See related story on Page B3.)

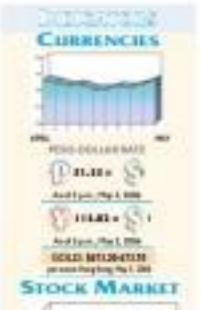
Says foregone revenue can reach P7B

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE has thumbed down a proposal from the labor department to give additional income tax relief to workers, saying the government should be conservative in giving incentives until it has fully resolved its deficit woes.

The Department of Labor and Employment specifically asked the DOF to increase the threshold amount of bonuses and benefits on...

FINANCE/ B6



Shares up another 1.53%

RP eyes $9B worth of currency swap deals

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES IS NEGOTIATING up to $9 billion worth of fresh bilateral currency swap deals with Japan, South Korea and China as part of measures to prevent the recurrence of external shocks similar to the Asian currency turmoil of 1997.

"This is part of the Chiang Mai initiative," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Amando Tetangco said yesterday.

In order to prevent a future regional currency crisis and to cope with such turmoil rapidly if and when this happens, the Chiang Mai initiative provides for the establishment of a network of bilateral swap arrangements to provide short-term liquidity among Asean countries plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Government sources said the bilateral currency swaps would involve as much as $5 billion with Japan, $3 billion with South Korea and $1 billion with China.

It would be the country's first time to enter into a currency swap deal with Japan and Korea while the arrangement with China would be a renewal of a previous agreement.

Tetangco said the currency swap deals could be finalized this September at the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund-World Bank annual meetings in Singapore.

But other government sources said a preliminary framework could be agreed upon during the Asian Finance Ministers' Meetings in India this week.

The currency swap deal being worked out with Japan will be a new, swap arrangement as it will convert the Philippines to provide up to $500 million to shoulder Indonesia, the world's second biggest economy if and when such a need arises, the sources added.

Under the Chiang Mai initiative, the swap arrangements will supplement existing international financing facili...

BFYI/ B6

Shares up another 1.53%

BSP YIELDS CLOSE: 1.63 percent higher yesterday to below 8% through buying, buoyed by an improving fiscal and economic outlook, dealers said.

They said the tone was positive and recent gains look likely to be sustained as investors became more confident.

SHARES/ B2

Teves pushes time limit for Congress to pass bills

By Michelle V. Rerne

CONVENTION DELEGATES REMINISCE
of the proposed 2006 national budget, finance Secretary Margarita Teves has proposed that legislators be given a time limit to act on urgent bills. She insisted, however, that if the lower House failed to act on a bill within a given time frame, the bill would be considered approved and automatically go to the Senate for the next stage of deliberations.

The finance chief said that to implement his proposal, the executive and the legislative branch could enter into an agreement as to the prescribed time frames, or legislators themselves could sponsor a bill to incorporate the proposal into law.

Teves made the suggestion in an interview with reporters hours before members of the finance committee convened by his absence and that of two other Cabinet officials in a hearing last Tuesday on spending economic bills.

Congress recently won the ban of the Supreme Court, which said it was illegal for executive branch officials to withhold information from members of the committee tasked to amend congressional hearings.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile was quoted as saying that if Cabinet officials were not interested in the legislative work of Congress, then the executive department was also not interested in passing laws pushed by the executive branch.

Teves had to meet before noontime at the Senate building because he had to attend the annual meeting of the ABB together with other finance chiefs of other countries, the Organization of Finance and...

Five months into the post, the legislator has yet to pass the P1.00-trillion national budget for 2006. Economic officials of the Arroyo administration have expressed concern over the delay, saying this would hamper the government's intention to jump-prime the economy.

Without the 2006 proposed budget, the government will be required to limit its spending within the 2005 budget, which stood at P963 billion.

Fiscal authorities said the proposed 2006 budget included additional funds for infrastructure development and enhancement of basic services, funds possible partly by the additional revenues from the VAT Reform Law.

The law, estimated to contribute P75 billion in incremental revenues, expanded the coverage of the value-added tax and raised the VAT rate to 12 percent from 10 percent.

Omen of little faith

STOCKHOLDERS OF THE (DELISTED) Philippine Stock Exchange will hold their annual meeting soon. This EXCITING annual meeting!

It's little wonder that that one of the bank's major shareholders, the SM group of retail supremo Henry Sy, should be preparing for it with a flurry of maneuvers.

Red Dyed wheat GIH president and general manager Winston Garcia (the namesake of Henry Sy's daughter Susie Sy-Coson in her bid to take over the bank at one) is seeing those SM group moves are ... well, "unknown."

It looks like the SM group wants to be certain that, in the election of the board during the next annual stockholders' meeting, what the group says goes.

Among them, at least on the Cebu homestown boy Garcia, is for the SM group to take half a control of the EPCIB board.

And from there—who knows—maybe full control of the bank? Uh-oh, there goes our P104 billion in the bank!

But why does Garcia see more contentious movements in the EPCIB board lately?

A few weeks ago, in a joint undertaking between the SM group and the rival, ahh, "cooperative" SSS, the EPCIB board replaced Rizalino Reyes-Lee Yuan Kee Hyperwarning Tiong Middle Bank's as chair with SSS president Corazon dela Paz hyperwarning 16 million SSS members, at least on paper.

Anyway, in another reported twist of fate just a few days ago, the EPCIB corporate secretary resigned for reasons still unknown to the public—meaning, the millions of SSS and GSIS members.

From what I hear, his replacement is now the subject of another quarrel between the SM group, on one hand, and those close-knit ex-officio of Trader Dr. Tomás Cabarrus, on the other, namely, the GSIS and Trade Middle East.

The SM group is nominating its own guy to the position. And just how important is the corporate secretary to a stockholder like the SM group?

Under existing rules, the corporate secretary has the last word on the validation of "proxies." In turn, "proxies" are important to any group of stockholders who do not go along with (still) broker shareholders.

For the SM group, its relationship with the EPCIB stockholders like the GSIS has not only turned bad. It has escalated into war.

Now, just after the corporate secretary resigned, the EPCIB board decided to remove two more members of the "nomination" committee.

They were presumed to be against the SM group's takeover scheme.

That is the same committee that screens all the candidates to the EPCIB board, including the so-called independent directors required under the law.

First to go out of the critical committee was its chair, who was none other than the muddled, the same man who has led the bank in the takeover scheme of the SM group disjointed or a troupe.

And who should replace him other than

Shares up another 1.53%

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 35.38 points to 2,340.61 after trading between 2,341.65 and 2,305.64. That was the highest close since Aug. 1, 1997, when it settled at 2,345.29.

Volume rose 3.91 billion shares to 6.923 billion.

The all-shares index rose 39.02 points to 1,682.46.

Gainers outpaced losers 85 to 47, with 41 stocks unchanged.

"Our market is going from one strength to the next," said Lawrence de Leon of Armed Capital Securities Inc. "Obviously, this upward pressure is a combination of both strong earnings expectations and the country's improving fiscal outlook."

Finance Secretary Margarita Teves said the other day that Moody's Investors Service might upgrade its sovereign ratings. She said Moody's has a negative outlook on the country's sovereign ratings.

The reason why Moody's behind the curve. Fiscal consolidation is the basis of an item that the Philippines, like Korea, is a re-rating story," said Hal Gordon, managing director of research in Asia at ING Asset Management in Singapore.

Stocks Land jumped 75 centavos to P1.125 and parent Ayala Corp. rose P12.50 to P382.50.

PLDT gained P5 to P2,045, while rival Globe Telecom advanced 055 to P968. Both telecom firms will report their first-quarter earnings next week. AFP

BREAKTIME

Commodore R. Bonnet III

Strike Pan again?

After that maneuver came the ouster of EPCIB president Susie Bonnevierra from the management.

Supposedly, Bonnevierra volunteered to get out of the committee because its immediate business had something to do with "shareholders' issues," theirs.

If that is so, then she more should a positive, proud guy like Bonnevierra over in the committee, perhaps to look after the interest of the public investors in the bank. It is a LISTED company, right?

After all, as management representative to the board, Bonnevierra represents all the stockholders—small and big alike—not just the SM group, or the SSS and the GSIS.

And so those are "moves" to Garcia, who is still trying to convince the SSS to bid out its shares in the bank together with those of the GSIS.

Obviously, if the SM group has its way in the annual stockholders' meeting, it can end up with more board seats in the bank.

Today, the SM group has four seats. Word has it nevertheless that one "independent" director is also seen to be working for the SM group, plus another one nominated by the SSS.

With the five board seats of the SSS, which has been, or "sympathetic" to the SM group, Susie Sy-Coson and company can do whatever they please with the bank.

* * *

HOW group in the real estate sector called Cebu is up in arms against what it calls "historic high" prices of cement.

And the prices are high despite the presence in the country of seven cement plants. Well, that case administration of Gloriosita briefly does to Santissima projects, for one.

In a position paper submitted to this case administration, Cebu noted that the local cement price is now at P378 per bag—from a low of P78 per bag only four years ago when local cement companies were complaining against cement smuggling.

Today cement costs only an equivalent of P3.33 per bag in Malaysia, P1.29 in Indonesia, P1.16 in Vietnam, and P1.07 in Thailand.

Cebu's officers think that the upsurge of the price have had something to do with the shutdown of local cement plants by their foreign owners.

This, Cebu is supporting the move of the JTO and the BOI to include cement in the list of priority projects meriting incentives from the government.

The Cebu paper said: "We urge the BOI and JTO to open the cement industry to more competition for the benefit of the consumers without delay!"

Amen!

PSBank

STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Branches)
As of March 31, 2006

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	P	571,972,042.98
Due from Bangko Sentral		1,928,936,459.40
Due from Other Banks		2,220,432,845.87
Investments, Loans and Stocks		16,823,963,761.87
Trading Account Securities (Net)		728,718,939.08
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		6,348,807,648.21
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)		10,044,005,931.42
Equity Investments (Net)		33,000,000.00
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)		1,150,377,450.97
Other Assets (Net)		
Property Owned/Acquired		1,700,685,020.48
Others		2,200,183,845.12
TOTAL ASSETS	P	54,767,713,371.25

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	P	4,835,111,654.00
Savings Deposits		8,163,773,843.22
Time Deposits		32,930,154,433.64
Due to Bangko Sentral		23,098,238.28
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		213,486,765.30
Bills Payable		
Others		1,882,234,113.66
Unearned Income & Other Deferred Credits		75,708,294.80
Other Liabilities		1,604,072,288.40
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	49,859,605,049.51

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	P	1,700,010,000.00
Surplus		2,651,081,497.80
Surplus Reserves		452,176,824.44
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	4,908,267,322.42
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	54,767,713,371.25

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Bills for Collection	P	407,883.08
Assets held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		171,371,112.16
Investment in Government Securities		3,146,132.12
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock		38,031,068.93
Other Assets		73,780,891.31
Accountabilities		
Trust & Other Fiduciary Investment/Fund Management		171,371,112.16
Other Contingent Accounts		58,467,879.93
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	492,202,004.14

RATIO INFORMATION

1. Deposits of		
a. Government	P	
b. Banks		30,918,159.61
c. Trust Department		70,634,284.51
2. a. Total Non-Performing Loans		1,838,868,080.13
b. Unbooked Loans & Other Risk Assets		4,176,617,994.89
c. Classified Loans Restructured		301,141,774.17
d. Specific Loan Loss Reserve		1,263,630,063.44
e. Total GOCC Loans/Advances		1,389,857,909.82
f. Total Due GOCC's Loans Interests		
g. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio		4.75%
h. Ratio of Total GOCC's Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio		3.59%
i. Ratio of Past Due GOCC to Total Loan Portfolio		0.14%
j. Return on Equity		20.14%
3. Compliance with Ratios Core Capital to RWA's		
a. Percentage of risk compliance with the mandated risk-based capital adequacy ratio for Thrift Banks/Rural Banks/Cooperative Banks		15.02%
b. Percentage of risk compliance with the mandated risk-based capital adequacy ratio for Medium Enterprises		8.73%

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Chairman

Alfrey V. Ty
Vice Chairman

Jaudenio P. Cinco
Vice Chairman

Margaret T. Chan

David G. Dove

Dennis L. Dore

Pascual M. Garcia III

Jose Maximo Laurel, IV

Alberto A. Pedroso

Regis V. Puno

Principal Officers

Pascual M. Garcia III
President

Rolando A. Rodriguez
Executive Vice President

Jaime V. L. Avendia
Senior Vice President

Ma. E. Gomez
Senior Vice President

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Makati City) S.S.

We, PERFECTO RAMON C. SIMPSON and PRISCILLA M. GARCIA, of the above-mentioned bank, do solemnly swear that all matters and facts set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd.) PERFECTO RAMON C. SIMPSON
First Vice President

(Sgd.) PRISCILLA M. GARCIA, III
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 28 April 2006, at Makati, affiant exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificates No. 1212 0345 issued at Makati City on 15 January 2006 and No. 12 1960 89 issued at Quezon City on 10 February 2006.

Doc. No. 71
Book No. III
Page No. 15/2006
Series of 2006

(Sgd.) ATTY. JOSE HERNANDEZ III
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- Saturday, May 6 at 2:00 p.m.
- Sunday, May 7 at 2:00 p.m.

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Schools turn bottles into bounty

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

RECYCLING OF PLASTIC BOTTLES IS a game where everyone wins. Ask the students of the Mineral Ho Elementary School in Makati.

Over the past two years, they have collected close to 4,000 kilograms of plastic bottles that San Miguel Packaging Products, a division of San Miguel Corp., exchanged for a 21-inch television set, two DVD players, two digital cameras, one floor polisher, 265 boxes of Frutchum and 80 boxes of assorted food products for their school under its PET bottle-recycling program.

San Miguel also sponsored last month a basketball clinic for more than 300 program participants, who got the chance to learn basketball fundamentals from San Miguel players such as Ula Bolado, Joey Ilas, Mario and Vince Hizon.

Creating awareness

Similar experiments are shared by students in 668 other schools that have responded to San Miguel's call in February 2004 for people to start collecting plastic bottles, including those from other companies.

Those who heed the call not only save from the bottles, they also become more environmentally conscious.

Oliver B. Gonzaga, business development manager of SMPI, says the collection campaign for the part of the company's plan to put up the first recycling plant for polyethylene terephthalate or PET bottles in the Philippines and Asia.

The PET recycling plant in San Fernando, Pampanga is scheduled to start operations in September this year and has the capacity to recycle 7,000 metric tons of PET bottles a year, equivalent to 140 million 1.5-liter PET bottles.

The country uses about 10,000 metric tons of PET bottles a year, equivalent to about 600 million 1.5-liter PET bottles. San Miguel accounts for about 30,000 metric tons.

Gonzaga says San Miguel decided to invest P600 million in a recycling plant not only to help solve the problems of stacking use of PET bottles, but also to ensure the stability of PET bottle supply for its own operations.

"San Miguel is the biggest user of PET bottles in the Philippines, that is why we

CORPORATE CITIZEN

[illegible] it upon ourselves to invest in a recycling plant," he explains.

The plant will clean the used PET bottles and break them down into small pieces for mixing with "virgin" PET to come up with new bottles, which are used for San Miguel's beverages and products.

These include the packaging for Coca-Cola products, Wilkins and Sunny Fiesta water bottles, Emperador cooking oil and Supreme vinegar.

The other parts of the bottles, such as the labels and caps, will be brought to other plants for possible recycling.

Gonzaga, however, stresses that the plant will use not only the PET bottles from San Miguel, but also those from other companies.

Recycled bottle 10% cheaper

He says the PET bottle recycling plant will enable San Miguel to use processed recycled PET plastic in its products. With this, the bottle can be recycled as many times as possible without compromising the quality of the bottles.

He says the resulting plastic resin will be 10 percent cheaper than if San Miguel used pure "virgin" resin.

"There are also the benefits of foreign exchange savings and stability of local supply."

Gonzaga says that with the increasing cost of agricultural land for San Miguel and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Education, the company solves the problem of supply by tapping the public school students.

Makati is top collector

Under the program, San Miguel will pay the schools for their collected PET bottles in kind, not cash.

"It is the schools that tell us what they want in exchange for the PET bottles than they collect," Gonzaga says.

"The most interesting request we got so far was a school trip to the United Kingdom."

Makati has been the top collector among the local government units, followed by Cebu and Davao.

Gonzaga adds that San Miguel has embarked on a campaign to encourage barangays all over the country to join in the PET bottle collection campaign.

Gonzaga says this is part of San Miguel's long-term goal to eventually use 100 percent recycled plastic for its packaging materials.

MEMBERS of Brgy. Batalang's (in Barangay) Ecological Solid Waste Management team sort out the bottles collected.

Gov't steps up efforts to create 1.5M jobs/yr

Bringing the right jobs to job seekers

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS teamed up with Asia's largest online recruitment network in an effort to create up to 1.5 million jobs a year in the next five years.

Under the partnership, the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Job Creation and Job[illegible] soon will jointly conduct several job fairs in the metropolis. The first of which, the maiden Career and Education Fair 2006, opened yesterday at the World Trade Center.

Jesper Viing, JobsDB.com managing director, said 70,000 jobs were available at the fair, while some 10,000 others were reported to risk.

"This is a very big event in terms of those numbers, but we are also preparing for small- to then that would be held in areas closer to the heart of communities," Viing said.

He added that the partners were expected to hold job fairs at 38 sites in the metropolis, including the Bonus area and two other venues in Manila.

Alex Secretario Arthur Yap, President's Adviser for Job Creation, said in an interview that various line agencies had "frontloaded" billions of funds meant for efforts that were "job-creation linked."

Yap said a total of P25 billion has been released to pump-prime the economy through projects that would open up opportunities for small and livelihood.

He said that amount forms part of the P35-billion worth of budget "savings" that the national government realized last year when the deficit spending reached only P145-billion, or way below the P180-billion target for 2006.

An additional P500 million was disbursed for road development projects in Western Mindoro, Central Luzon and mainland Southern Tagalog," Yap said. "This is basically road clearing work and 54,000 jobs are expected to be opened up."

The former agriculture secretary said more jobs were expected to be created as the Municipal Irrigators Administration embarked on a P4-billion effort to rehabilitate water services for 200,000 hectares of farmland.

"Another P600 million was released to the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority for training vouchers to be granted to job-hunters who want to work in call centers," Yap added.

Further, Yap said his office was pushing for the relaxation of lending rules covering micro, small and mini-sized enterprises.

"Last year alone, 550,000 jobs were created as a total of P42 billion in MSME lending funds were released, to end. "If now 900[illegible] could gain access to funds, the sector can make between 1.3 million and 1.4 million jobs this year."

In tourism, at least 1 million jobs can be created this year based on the Department of Tourism's projection that between 2.5 million and 3 million tourists would visit the country.

"There are many jobs out there and the challenge is how to bring the appropriate jobs to the job seekers," Yap said. "During the National Manpower Summit held last March, the private sector forecast about 300,000 openings this year so the important strategy would be to facilitate job-matching."

KYOCERA
THE NEW VALUE FRONTIER

Federal Mindanao: Land of promise, land of jobs

(1st of 2 parts)

MINDANAO IS RICH IN NATURAL resources. A third of our land is planted to major crops—accounting for 100 percent of local cocoa production, 95 percent of pineapples, more than 30 percent of coconuts, rubber and corn, and, of course, the pristine, magnificent rainforests, bananas plus lots of vegetables.

Our bananas contribute $70.5 million to export receipts; fresh pineapples, $53.1 million and rubber, $22.1 million.

It is no wonder that we earn trillions more than 40 percent of the Philippines' food requirements and account for more than 20 percent of national food trade.

Mindanao is the second largest island in the Philippines. With a land area of 102,613 square kilometers, it occupies one-third of the Philippines' total land area and is larger than a number of Asian countries, including Taiwan or Singapore.

We have rich mineral resources and one will find nearly half of the country's gold reserves in the island. Our metallic deposits include lead, zinc, ore, iron, copper, chromite, magnesite and gold. Nonmetallic mineral resources include marble, salt, sand, gravel, silica, clay and limestone.

Cultural diversity and its natural beauty make Mindanao one of many favored tourist destinations. Recently, we had weekly flights from Davao to the territory of Palau. Our white sand beaches, scenic volcanoes, vast orchid gardens and various ethnic festivals are only some of our unique tourist attractions. The tourist arrival record was at two million from January to July 2005, posting almost 25 percent increase from previous year's level.

Businesses, investments

The investments registered by the Private Industrial Authority in Cagayan de Oro City reached P1.07 billion in the first four months of the year, up 132 percent from P0.44 billion in the same period last year. Twelve projects had been approved by the Board of Investments and PIA. These are expected to create 1,894 jobs, up 45 percent from the 754 last year.

Foreign investors' equity infusion increased to P687 million from only P1.3 million, while equity from Filipino businessmen rose 11 percent to P406 million from P365 million.

MINDANAOWORLD

Joji Ragos-Blazo

Most of the approved investments came from livestock poultry and feeds; processed foods and beverages; refrigeration/storage services; motor vehicle parts and components manufacturing; and tree-to-product lines.

The rest are manufacturing ventur get 49 percent of the approved projects this year. The sector also got the bulk of foreign equity investments this year totaled by the P320-million infusion by Japanese carrier Philippine Sinter Corp. located in Naraden in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental.

Investments in processed foods and beverages sector grew by 29 percent to P286 million in January-April this year from P223 million in the same period last year.

The livestock, poultry and feeds sector posted P161-million worth of investments, up from last year's P69 million. Production services sector accounted for 5 percent of the total and motor vehicle parts, 2 percent.

Employment is the island

We have a total labor force of 6.2 million—95 percent are working or gainfully employed; while five percent or 430,000 are unemployed. Due to our robust agriculture-based economy, our unemployment rate is higher by two percentage points than the country's 92.7 percent. The majority of our workers are in the agricultural sector, followed by services and manufacturing. This is mainly due to the bright and upbeat performances of the economy despite the oil price increases. As we've expected, the resiliency of Mindanao withstood the pressures of the environment.

(2nd part—The Promise of Prosperity)

(Joji Ragos Blazo is an advocate for Mindanao, chair of Mindanaoworld Foundation Inc., Mindanao representative to the Export Development Council, and chair of Joji Ragos Foundation. E-mail comments to jojiblazo2@yahoo.com.)

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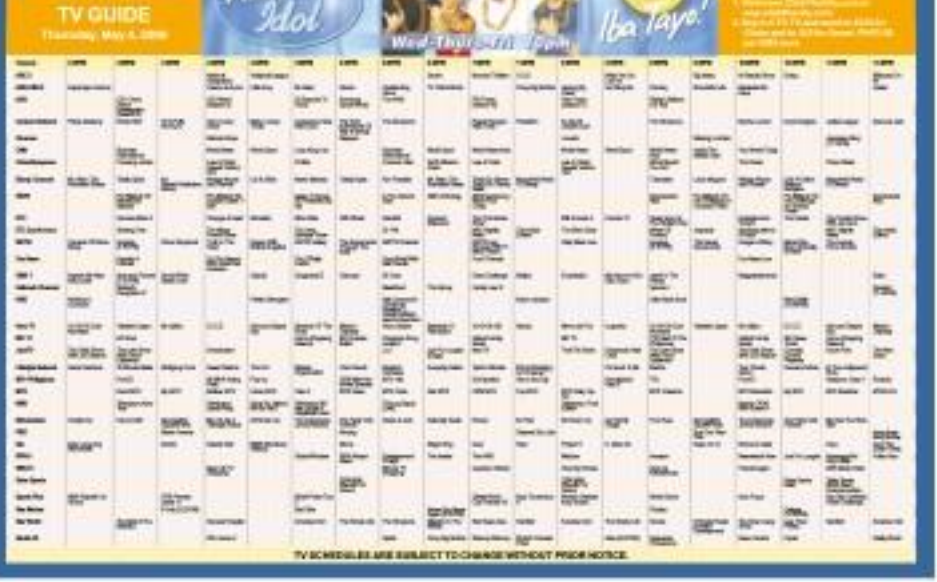

Q1 pre-need sales down 28%

Life, education plans segments post biggest drop

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF PRE-NEED firms remained fragile as sales slipped 27.8 percent to P5.95 billion in the first quarter of the year from P8.24 billion in the same period last year, data from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) showed.

Sales of life plans recorded the biggest drop of 38.2 percent to P919.3 million in the first quarter from P1.42 billion in the same quarter last year.

Sales of education plans fell 37.6 percent to P1.84 billion from P2.48 billion last year.

The pension plans segment of the industry, however, bucked the trend as sales rose 13 percent to P3.3 billion in the first quarter from P2.86 billion in the same period last year.

The total number of plans sold fell 38.42 percent to 43,912 in the first quarter from 127,032 in the same period in 2005.

Life plans led the drop as the number of plans sold declined 39.8 percent followed by education plans which contracted 39.6 percent.

For March alone, total sales declined 41.95 percent to P1.47 billion from P2.54 billion in the same month last year.

Education plans sold plunged 59 percent to P327.3 million in March from P726.84 million in the same month last year.

Life plans sales during the month, likewise, dropped 35.5 percent to P727.2 million. Sales of pension plans was lower by 26.1 percent to P921 million in March.

TOP PERFORMER AWARD

Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) recently conferred Metrobank with the "Most Around Performance" award in recognition of its active participation and commitment to DBP's development efforts. Metrobank was nominated for being a top performing Participating Financial Institution partner that supports the government's development goals via special lending. Metrobank vice chair Php100-Mega (40-from left) received the plaque from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. Looking on are DBP president and chief executive officer Reynaldo David and DBP chair Antonio Alinsangan Jr.

Nieto asks court to stop PHC stockholders' meet today

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A SCHEDULED STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING today of listed Roxas Holdings Corp. (RHC), an affiliate of Philippine Commercial Capital Inc. Corp., hangs in the balance as a shareholder files for a court order to stop the meet.

PHC director Manuel Nieto Jr. has asked the Court of Appeals to stop the stockholders' meeting slated for today as ordered by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

As of press time yesterday, SEC Chair Fe Barin said the SEC had not received any word from the court on the Nieto petition.

Nieto also said the validation of proxies to determine who would participate in today's stockholders' meeting had proceeded yesterday.

In a petition filed with the appellate court on April 18, Nieto asked the CA to prevent the SEC from proclaiming nets declared "as his, personal, unique, unreportable and unfair, tantamount to a grave abuse of discretion." It also asked the court to annul and set aside three orders issued by the SEC and to defer the PHC stockholders meeting.

Nieto also claimed that the SEC had issued "ultra vires" orders under the guise and pretense of merely directing PHC counsel to call for annual stockholders' meeting this year. Ultra vires refer to orders issued outside the authority of the issuing party.

Nieto argued that these arbitrary acts were causing prejudice, injury and damage to the petitioner, as well as the members of the board of directors, and other shareholders of the sequestered corporations Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. and its subsidiary Philcomsat.

The government, by virtue of sequestered shares, owns 30 percent of PHC, while it owns 100 percent of Philcomsat, the controlling shareholder of PHC.

Nieto is asking the appellate court to stop the SEC from deciding on legal issues which are not within its powers under the Securities Regulation Code. It also asked the court to annul and set aside three assailed orders of the SEC which it said in turn, endanger PHC's corporate life.

On Feb. 16, respondent SEC and general counsel Ernesto Ordoñez issued its first order directing PHC to hold its annual stockholders' meeting not later than April 17 and prescribing guidelines in forming a nominations and elections committee. On March 16, Nieto filed his letter asking the SEC to reconsider its decision and defer the calling of the annual meeting.

Nieto further claimed that on April 4, the SEC issued its second assailed order scheduling the stockholders' meeting today May 4.

On the same day the SEC issued a third order denying Nieto's motion for reconsideration. The SEC said that holding an annual stockholders' meeting for PHC was proper after the Supreme Court approved a compromise agreement last June 15 between shareholders Potenciano Ilusorio and the government setting issues over who will represent PCIC and Philcomsat in PHC.

Ayala to offer P3B worth of preferred shares

AYALA CORP. HAS APPROVED A PLAN TO offer P3 billion worth of preferred B shares at P100 a share.

Investors realize said the issue was aimed at raising funds for debt repayment.

Preferred shares get the first crack at dividend payments but have no voting rights.

Ayala Corp. has an option to increase the size of the offer to P5.6 billion.

The proceeds of "B" shares will be offered at its par value of P10.00 a share with a fixed quarterly dividend rate.

BPI Capital Corp. and Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. will be the joint issue managers and book runners.

BPI Capital Corp., Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. and First Metro Investment Corp. will act as the joint lead underwriters. Issue date has yet to be announced.

Ayala earlier announced it will reclassify unissued preferred shares of the company to to 5.8 billion new class of preferred shares with a par value of P1 per share or a total of P5.8 billion.

The reclassified shares will also allow Ayala to be flexible in using preferred shares as a hedging option in light of new reporting standards. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Filinvest to issue P1B worth of 5-year notes

FILINVEST DEVELOPMENT Corp., the holding company of the Filinvest Group, is issuing this week P1 billion worth of five-year corporate notes to raise funds for its resort project in Cebu and for debt payment, officials said.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FDC said it would issue the notes to Associated Development Bank of the Philippines (ADP) on Friday for omnibus corporate notes facility and security agreements was signed by the company and ADP yesterday.

The notes will be secured by real estate mortgage on the company's property in Mactan, Cebu, and a pledge of certain common and preferred shares of Filinvest Asia Corp. held by FDC.

In its meeting yesterday, FDC's board of directors approved the execution of the said agreements.

FDC is launching this year a seven-hectare development dubbed Sonoma Resort Town, Seascape Inn on a 1.2-hectare seaside property located in Mactan, Cebu. The proposed resort community will offer private lots, condos, villas, townhouses and a beach club. The world-class resort is geared toward the booming tourism trade and is intended to fill the shortage in prime tourism destinations in Cebu. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Finance rejects tax relief ...

Front page B1

exempt from the income tax.

The threshold is currently set at P30,000, which means bonuses and benefits (such as Christmas bonus, and productivity incentives) in excess of this amount is subject to income tax.

The DOLE wanted the amount increased to P60,000 to increase its inflation since the last 1998's when the P30,000 ceiling was set.

But the DOF said the proposal would result in huge revenue losses for the government. A finance official said preliminary estimates showed that the government stand to lose between P6 billion and P7 billion in potential revenues if the government would adopt DOLE's proposal.

"Right now, the DOF's position is that the government should first focus on the proposal to exempt minimum wage earners from the income tax," the finance official said. Ideally, the official added, benefits to other income groups that would result in any foregone revenues for the government should be tackled only after the government shall have aided out its budget deficit.

The DOF earlier threw its support behind a proposal to exempt minimum wage earners from the income tax. A bill on the proposal is pending in Congress.

While waiting for the bill to be passed, the chairman of Internal Revenue already issued a revenue regulation requiring employers to temporarily defer withholding the income tax of employees until it next year.

The DOF and the BIR are hoping that the bill favorably exempting employees from the income tax will have already been passed by next year.

The finance official said exempting only minimum wage earners from the income tax was something the government could afford because it would only lead to P5.08 billion in potential tax collection to be lost a year.

Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas said tax lovers in the DOF that her office's proposal would have been a nice gift to workers during the Labor Day celebration. She said workers' (media) reprieve given the increasing cost of living.

Under the government's fiscal program, the budget deficit stood at P118.8 billion last year and is expected to be trimmed down to P125 billion this year. The government expects the deficit to fall to next by 2008.

RP eyes $9B ...

From page B1

tax, including those provided by the IMF.

In principle, the financial assistance links to the IMF facilities. Up to 10 percent of the maximum amount of withdrawals could be provided without linkage with the IMF facilities.

The maximum amount of drawdown under the arrangement will be determined by bilateral negotiations.

Disbursement will be made in a concerted way based on consultation among the swap-providing countries. A coordinating country will coordinate the consultation process.

In the aftermath of the 1997 currency crisis, Japan proposed the creation of an Asian monetary fund as a framework for promoting financial cooperation and policy coordination in the region, which would help Asian economies prevent and manage better future financial crises. The proposal received a positive response from a number of East Asian countries, but was opposed by the United States, the European community and the IMF.

The Chiang Mai initiative, named after the region in northern Thailand where the finance work was crafted in 2000, was the closest alternative to a regional defense mechanism that the region was able to establish.

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BUSINESS

Cut in oil import tariff seen

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO CUT THE tariff on oil imports will likely breeze through Tariff Commission deliberations and become an executive order before Congress resumes its session on May 15.

This was because the proposal did not meet any opposition during yesterday's hearing at the Tariff Commission, said Jesusita Mesina, da, director of the Department of Energy oil industry management bureau.

"Most likely, the EO will be issued before Congress resumes its session on the 15th. Then the mechanics for the implementation will be formulated by the DOE, (Department of Finance and the National Economic and Development Authority)," she said in a briefing.

Like what Finance Secretary Margarita Teves had earlier said, Mesina said the implementation of the tariff reduction would follow the "sliding scale" method, which meant that the current 3-percent tariff would go down by 1 percentage point when world oil prices hit a certain level, and by another percentage point when prices go even higher.

She said the tariff would even go down to zero, if necessary.

"There will be in the mechanics, which will come out shortly after the EO. We just have to consider several different scenarios when we formulate these guidelines," she said.

Apart from determining the triggers for each percentage point drop in the import tariff, she said the DOE, DOF and Neda would also have to consider whether or do a blanket implementation for crude and all types of refined petroleum products or to go for a "focused" implementation.

Seasonal implementation would mean implementing the reduction for products used by the public transport sector, particularly diesel, she said.

The impact of the tariff reduction on pump prices would also depend on which products would be covered by the tariff cut, she added.

"The target is to maximize the benefit to public transport," she said.

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NTC clamps down on 'text spam'

By Dexter L. Lacar

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission yesterday clamped down on commercial text messages being broadcast over cellular phone networks in response to mounting complaints from the public.

In a circular, the NTC ordered mobile phone "text" content providers to register with the regulator before being allowed to send so-called "text spam" messages.

NTC, in turn, shall provide the telecommunications firms and the Department of Trade and Industry with a list of content providers authorized to broadcast text spam.

At the same time, NTC ordered all telecommunications firms and their content providers to first register their presence with the DTI before offering them to the public.

Earlier, NTC Commissioner Ronald O. Solis said complaints lodged with regulators against unwanted spam text messages numbered "in the hundreds."

Some users complain about the inconvenience of receiving unsolicited messages and some complain that they are billed by their cellular phone operators for services without their consent.

Cellular phone firms deny billing clients for those spam messages, although persistent complaints have prompted the NTC to further tighten existing guidelines governing commercial text message broadcasters.

In response to these complaints, NTC also ordered networks to unsend text broadcast messages only once and free of charge.

NTC also clamped down on broadcast text messages sent over to subscribers who have agreed to receive them, mandating that such messages should not be sent to clients from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m.

This is in response to some complaints from subscribers that text spam messages are often sent in the dead of night, often disturbing their rest.

The new memorandum also orders the creation of a "clearing house" that will monitor the sending of all such messages, although it failed to detail how the system will operate.

Chinese firm eyes hybrid corn project

By Raoul W. Domingo

A CHINESE GROUP IS LOOKING AT A PROject that involves planting a million hectares of land with hybrid corn for export to China, according to the Philippine Exporters Confederation.

Shakespeare president Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr. said the plan was just one of many ventures that provide opportunities for local farmers.

Ortiz-Luis did not give further details on the Chinese project but said the trend in agribusiness was for farmers to partner with big food processors like San Miguel Foods and Vitarich that are searching for reliable growing partners.

Another option was to go into agri-forestry amid a shortage in supply of furniture-grade plantation timber for the furniture industry.

In a speech delivered during the 38th graduation rites at the Central Luzon State University, the science of agriculture and fisheries education in Munoz, Nueva Ecija, Ortiz-Luis called on new graduates to put up businesses and help boost the nation's output growth.

"Unless and until the farming sector gets modernized and its productivity increased, the Philippines will remain a third world country in a neighborhood of economic dragons," he said.

Ortiz-Luis, who is also chair of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the farm sector grew only at an average of 2.8 percent a year from 1996 to 2006 or barely faster than the country's population growth.

He said that the sector failed to progress because those engaged in agriculture treated farming only as a source of subsistence, not as a business enterprise.

LIFESTYLE

SALADS SPECIAL

Keep cool and serve salads. Pick the freshest veggies at the weekend 'tiangge.' Try Asian or Pinoy dressings. Or do as the chefs do and hit the salad bar at any of the restaurants in town

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DON'T WE ALL JUST LOVE A good salad? But have we ever gone out of our way to know what a salad is? Or have we truly enjoyed it the way we should? How does one make the Perfect Green Salad?

"A salad is a food item generally served as dish before or after the main dish as a separate course, as a main course in itself, or as a side dish accompanying the main dish. The word 'salad' comes from the French *salade* or the same meaning, from the Latin *salata*, today, from *sal*, salt. It also refers to a blended food item ...often meat, seafood or eggs blended with mayonnaise, finely chopped vegetables and seasonings—*adalorcan* be served as part of a green salad, but is often used as a sandwich filling."

There are various types of salads but today let's focus on the green salad.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Maggie Aglipay

Tips for the PGS

I once had supper at a hotel and the opportunity to spend time with two Michelin star chefs in Singapore. I asked them their thoughts on what a salad should be and what makes the perfect salad...

Chef Kevin Thornton says: "The art of making salad is simple. Everything must be fresh! I am passion, infatuation to [illegible]. The difference is that, unlike you guys, we have seasons and that allows us to make use of various ingredients and change them as the seasons change. Then may I know that the produce is as prime. My choice is to have my own garden where I could pick everything off just before service. And my favorite dressing is a simple one made of garlic, olive oil, basil, parmesan cheese, salt and pepper. All these are blended and emulsified."

Irish chef Philippe Ingouville adds: "I like picking my own salad greens. I like using the wild ones. It is always those high -end good-quality potatoes – only the freshest will do. I do not like many kinds put together in a salad of many ingredients. I like more to be part of one kind, lightly pulsed and dribbled with no more than a good olive oil, just that. Or with a little salt and pepper and sometimes, vinegar. Then, I go to make the greens."

To sum up, a good salad is quite simple to achieve. It must comprise of the freshest greens and the best olive oil. It is about discovering the vegetables and not masking them with such intense flavors from the dressing. And a good salad should be tossed in dressing and not swimming in it!

It may not be as easy for us to get freshly picked greens, but not impossible, as I have seen potted lettuce plants in the supermarket. The new fast thing here is for the many types of lettuce readily available. There are even baked Tirre packs of mixed greens that are

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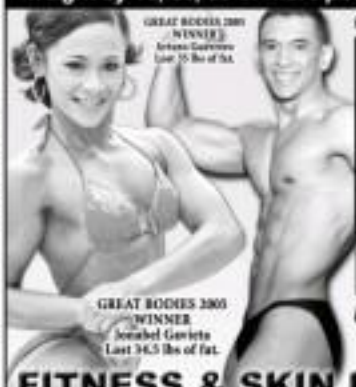

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SKIN CENTER HOTLINES: ALABANG ... EMERALD ... CALOOCAN ... GREENHILLS ... MAKATI ... MEGAMALL ... PASAY RD. ... PASIG ...

ANTONIO'S mixed green salad with fruits and nuts

Where do chefs and foodies like to get their green leaves of summer? Read on

THIEN Dung's Vietnamese Pomelo and Shrimp Salad

A GLASS of light salad from Edsa Shangri-La's Mezz

REFRESHING array of salads from Makati Shangri-La's Circles

Salad days

By Margie Baga-Reyes

IF YOU HAVE A CRAVING FOR salad, if you're dreaming of a mountain of fresh, crisp greens drizzled with tangy dressing and topped with sweet-peppery croutons and creamy shavings of cheese, where do you go?

We asked certified foodies, restaurateurs, chefs and time-blue salad eaters where they get their "green fix." Here's what they told us.

Johnly Kiss
Baking expert and French baker owner

"I head for Shangri-La Makati's Circles or Edsa Shangri-La's Mezz and go straight to the salad bar. I like romaine lettuce, arugula, endive and iceberg, and my favorite dressings are Caesar, honey mustard and honey balsamic."

Eugene Raymundo
Chef and food stylist

"I go to Enchanted's Inc to salads. I just love their hefty serving of fresh greens with Caesar dressing plus the chicken fillet that goes well with everything on the plate. My perfect dinner on a night out!"

"I recently make my own salad at home with greens and fruits, either dried or fresh, a splash of olive oil and balsamic on my all-time favorite. I also make wasabi vinaigrette with mango and basil."

Maia Gamboa
Food expert and restaurateur

"Tonkatsu Kaiso (Seaweed) salad, Peoples Palace's Pomelo Salad, summer-inspired green salad with herbs, persimmon and raspberry vinaigrette, Chikubi's Caesar and Insalata di Pomodoro. These places serve their salads and dressings cold, which makes all the difference. Their greens and fruits are fresh and crisp, and the dressing never drowns the greens.

"I am a big fan of Caesar salads and have fond memories of Bistro's in Bogota when I was little... They make lovely lettuce delicious! Today, I usually order mixed greens with vinaigrette and basil."

People who run around Metro Manila trying to catch half-day weekend markets can now have two days to do their shopping and in just one place

MANY vegetables at Garden House are organically grown

Fresh produce 'tiangge' opens

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

A SINGALONG SPARK FROM FOLD-mobile, South Goodman, plump tomatoes from Batangas and organically grown lettuce from Tagaytay—these are just some of the things on offer at the new Edsa Garden House, described as a "flower and apricot and growers' flea market."

People who spend weekends just trying to catch half-day produce tiangge held in different parts of Metro Manila will be pleased to know that come they have all of two days to shop for some hard-to-find food stuff and organically grown agricultural products.

Unlike in supermarkets and even wet markets, the vendors are often the growers themselves, eliminating the middlepersons that usually accounts for higher prices.

And these small producers often have surprises in store for customers. At dryness of weekend tiangges latest, you can count on finding a few bunches of freshly picked pako and some other greens you probably have not heard of before, pahe (small green mangoes that some people swear are better for salad than the big ones), newly harvested mamonds and even the pow sun rimas (although it is not really salad material).

Located at the Manila Seedling Bank on the Edsa side, near the corner of Quezon Avenue, the 5,000-sq m shop was set up by Adela Ang to help promote Filipino products. It provides small-scale producers, restaurateurs, hobbyists and others, who move around the different tiangge venues, a regular weekend space for selling their products should they so wish.

As the name suggests, Edsa Garden House's business for seven days a week will be places, fresh flowers and garden supplies and accessories. But on Saturdays and Sundays, the parking area will be given over to small- and medium-scale producers who are expected to bring, aside from fresh vegetables and fruits, fish, meat products and regional Filipino delicacies.

Among the first to set up stalls in the market are several organic vegetable producers, including the Organic Producers Trade Association cooperative, Bogaci, Back to Basic, Gaucimel Farm and Earthworm Sanctuary.

THE "INGREDIABLE" fresh produce tiangge section down at Garden House.

Two or three bakeries which eschew preservatives and other chemicals have also set up shop, as well as a lawyer who is a pesticide expert on the side.

Aside from giving small producers a venue for selling their products, the Edsa Garden House also organizes lectures and workshops for those who would like to learn about gardening and farming either for livelihood or recreation.

The Edsa Garden House will be formally opened on May 12.

The perfect green salad

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ready to be tossed.

Remember that by the look of the vegetable alone, you can tell if it is fresh. The leaves must be upright and the stems still firm and "crisp" to the touch.

Once you get home, wash the greens in a bowl filled with cold water, carefully handling them by the stem base, running them through your fingers. Avoid getting the stems bruised or the leaves damaged. Remove any discolored portions of the leaves and prepare according to how you wish to serve them.

It is important to completely dry the greens to avoid diluting the dressing, thus ruining the salad. The leaves should then be kept in a zipper bag in the refrigerator until the greens are ready to be tossed and served.

Oil is a vital ingredient in salad-making. Different oils may be used to attain different flavors. However, olive oil is the most formidable of salad oils. If you set to serve salads with just oil and vinegar, make sure that the olive oil you use is the best you can possibly find.

Let's talk about vinegar. A good rule for this is use your vinegar of choice. There are many flavored vinegars for specific uses, especially for salads. Just remember to use vinegar with acidity levels of five to six percent. If it's too strong, it overpowers the greens. If you must, lessen the quantity.

French toss

In a salad bowl, pour the dressing. Using the "serving" salad spoon and fork, make an "F" and let the utensils sit in the bowl. Just before serving, drop the greens and toss. The best appropriate portion of the salad (from dressed), the bottom leaves go to the guests (perfectly dressed). Tossing the greens must be done only before serving! You would not like a soggy salad!

Pinup dressings

I have borrowed salads and salad dressings time and again in 48... by today, let's do dressings with a Pinoy twist.

Mango Dressing:
¼ c mango or guava jam
2 tbsp vinegar
½ c olive or vegetable oil
Salt and pepper, to taste

Whisk jam, vinegar. Add oil in a fine stream. Season to taste.

Mascarado Dressing:
3 tbsp olive or vegetable oil
2 tsp garlic
1/3 c rice vinegar
2 tbsp fresh lime juice
¼ c granulated sugar
1 tbsp chili garlic oil

Whisk ingredients together. Season to taste.

My hands-on cooking class series for newlyweds and beginners starts next week. Call 5896264 or 6331152.

E-mail the author at cooper@inquirer.com.ph.

FILIPINO'S Sicilian Chicken Salad

CIRCULO'S Goddess & Greens salad

RICE, POLAR, CHINA SALAD at Hotel Philippine Plaza's Salad

Robert Castaneda
Foodie and restaurateur

"I go to Italianni's for its huge servings of salads. Very filling. I also like Bonito's Garden because their veggies are clean and freshly picked. I love veggies with Asian, and when I make my own salad I use raspberry vinaigrette."

Joanne Limsiaco
Senior chef/Host chef

"I enjoy Mediterranean flavors and Shrimp Salad from Times Deng because it's just so refreshing and almost guilt free. I love salads that combine fruits with fresh greens. I love making my own Caesar dressing because I like it with more anchovies than the usual."

Mary Reyes-Lumen
Chef and food magazine editor

"Instant salad of Dakota Shikuma on Pinoy Food is the best. Also exceptional are Italian. It's for big servings of Caesar and tuna, which has a little "chop chop" salad. I also go to Inferno with big salad bars like Mandaluyong, Philippine Plaza and Shangri-La.

"For Pinoy salad, it's best to make your own with recipes. Among pusit, tipe mangga, tofu-sisig and Sushi and Bihi Inarisa. Dressing for me is mangoes, but when I want to indulge, I make sour cream and adobo pointer dressing and add parmesan. Me'ro-ding mustard sauce, boiled beetroot and cucumber and celery and paires with asian dressing. Talaga ngay!"

Happy Cinguanco
Sales Coordinator

"Kids Bird's Lobster and Foie Gras Salad and Hemisphere Rotisserie's Grilled Chicken with pomelo, grapes, orange slices and arugula combine as a bed of salad greens with raspberry vinaigrette sprinkled with toasted almonds.

"If I make my own salad, I make different fruit-flavored vinaigrette dressings. It's sweet, flavorful and tasty at the same time low in calories."

Jacqueline Alejo
Restaurateur and organic believer

"I'd like to go to places where lettuce and salad herbs are organically grown. Some hotels do get organic lettuce, but not regularly. For herbs and vegetables, the Bistro orange salad of La Trattoria Graziosa in Shangri-La Plaza Mall is a good choice since it is a source of fresh salad greens, proteins and a straightforward, well-seasoned vinaigrette.

"I love low-oil freshly picked culinary herbs on my salads. Sometimes I make a herb cocktail with italian flat parsley, coriander, basil, dill and mix them with a vinaigrette or an olive-salad dressing. I use basic only sparingly in salads, but they can be countless combos."

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efining the salad, Filipino-style

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Arnis

of course, he would take beer with them while the produce were being served and placed into storage.

They were enchanted by chit-at GI who took up agriculture in a university here, bought seeds in the United States, planted them and did the marketing himself. He also discovered that sellers, dismayed after the beans were processed, made for a good breakfast.

And so we know and see romaine, Lollo Rosa, red top, cocktail or arugula, red-leaf, oak-leaf and curly endive.

Broader repertoire

Through the years, we've added to our repertoire of dressing—honey-mustard, olive oil and balsamic vinegar combo, red wine vinaigrette, ranch, blue cheese.

Some specialty greens salads for health or diet reasons. And like food joints, enduring the trend, provide salad choices as part of their offerings. The menu not only is a wise business decision, it also helps project the image that fast food can serve healthy dishes.

But all that's in the 'thirteen mode. I suggest we go on Filipino mode and redefine the salad.

Why not bought at the spring rolls? Here, dried vegetables are gathered in a rice-flour wrapper. You have the crunch of fried lumpia and the variety of textures in a fresh one. There's the olive wrapped in delicious crepes. The dip can be the dressing, vinegar or the paste, a bevies sauce of sugar, soy sauce, broth, salt, cornstarch and minced garlic.

You can now re-cut meat and get another kind of salad. Remember? The most common in the market and all over the country is sinugar or tuyo, those grape like seaweeds. A friend coastal inland every time of late as agents of the sea in your mouth in small doses.

In Cebu recently, I had the brunch like goto and the thin strands of rice noodles. The latter is at once like green to allow by red tomato and green a splash of vinegar to complete the tastebuds sing seaweeds.

Balo or Bilibid and lots a sometimes cooked with fish and coconut milk or taken fresh with the Filipino vinaigrette. Some people like to mix in some shrimp paste, tomatoes or sliced salted eggs.

Our mixed greens course of boiled vegetables—sayabeng, kangkong, okra and eggplant. It's beginning take or shrimp that's the dip/dressing.

Artist's salad

Rolling slices of tomato head to how the kids see warm. The person artist Ilga Bigsan once demonstrated the dish at my place in Tiong, Quezon. The dressing consisted of freshly extracted milk pressed from grated coconut meat expertly to charcoal. Vinegar is then then added. Bigsan placed oil cup, fire coke, edible chinese lilac or some flowers.

The flowers also make a dish beautiful. Apart from aesthetic, there are the savoury, artist flowers that don't deserve the awful-mannering name, and the yellowish squash flowers.

So we do have Filipino salads except they aren't called so. Establish is a new invention.

And because we have learned ourselves from other cuisines, there are can add on the available repertoire.

For instance, an aunt made the best vinaigrette salad with mayonnaise, a non-American concept was unthinkable until I tasted how good it was, not at all bitter but had a balance of sweet and salty flavors, a-lot of crunch, and mixed in with small, boiled red shrimps.

And for sauce sprout, a friend combines chopped red eggs with olive oil and balsamic vinegar for the dressing.

POTTERY artist Ilga Bigsan's pako salad with tomato flowers

A VERSION of the pako salad with salted eggs and mayonnaise

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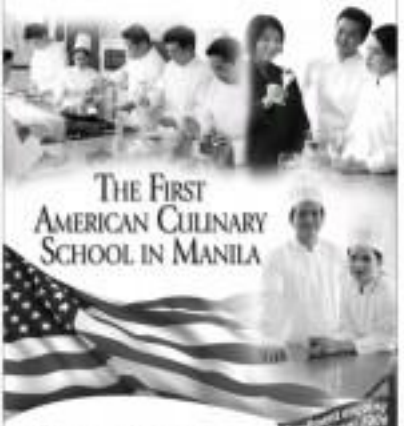

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Thai guest chef presents signature dishes

DO FORMOSA HOTEL in Quezon is holding a Thailand Celebration May 6-20. Sweet chef Thanitha Boonsiri of the Peninsula Bangkok's Thaidee Thai restaurant will be showcasing her signature dishes such as Tai Yang Tai Rot (baked and marinated chicken with lemongrass and roast with your sauce), Chor Hoa Pla Kra (Young pan fried with bell pepper sauce) and Yam Som Oh (young Pomelo salad with prawns) salad with prawns). Call 3821888.

IMAGINATION HOTEL Manila's **Tin Bun** is featuring Old Style Continuous until May 14. Ingredients and preparation on the same day are cooked just before serving and are presented in a favorite menu. Dishes include Roasted Rendang with Nasi Lemak, Duck Yard and Green Vegetables, Oven-baked Cod Fillet with Honey Sauce, Old Amsterdam Kaas with Sliced Lobster, Charcoal-roasted Honey Pork Cutlet with Sesame Seed, Roasted Pork Loin, Dried Scallops and Mushroom Bread served with cauliflower puree Chicken and Baked Pork Spareribs with Marinated Asian Lamb. Available daily for lunch and dinner. Call 1504888.

DINING OUT

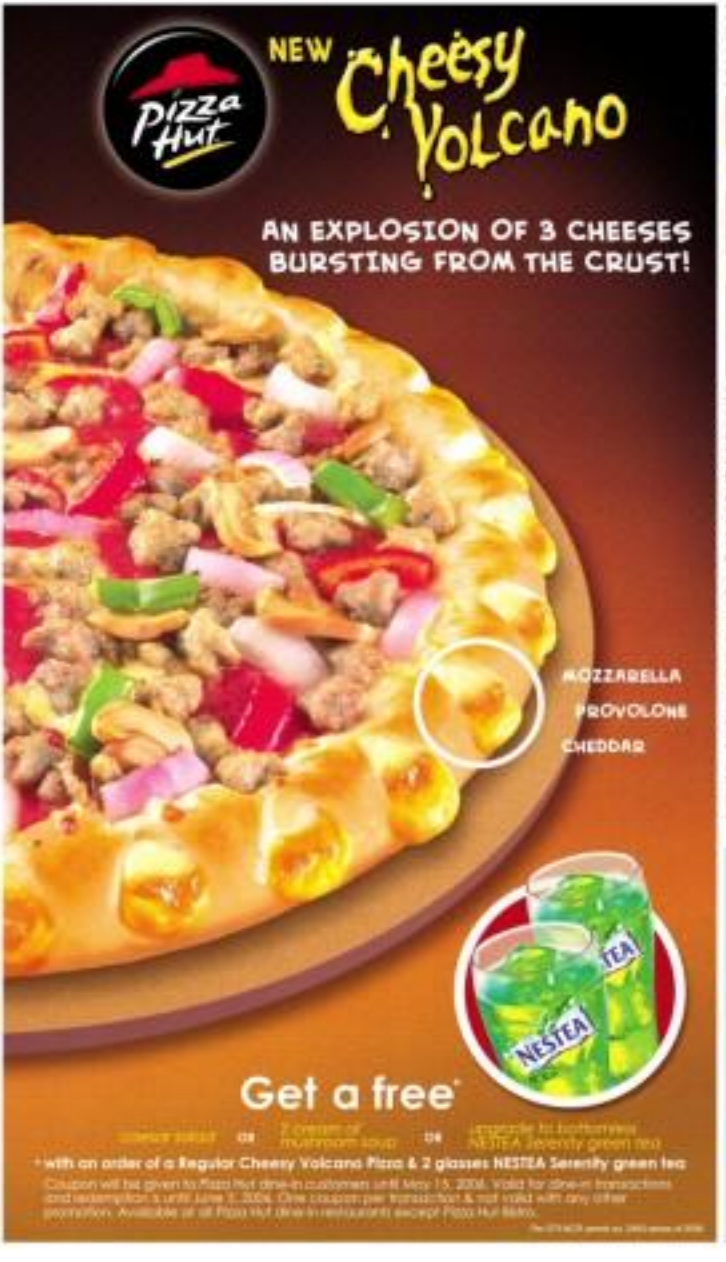
ITALIANNI'S chef creates de Roma for two come up with a new selection of dishes, including Prosciutto and Provolone Crostini, traditional Italian ham served with toasted Tuscan bread topped with tomatoes and covered with creamy provolone cheese with roasted capsicums and grapes on the side, Parmesan Crusted Fish Fillet strips fish breaded with parmesan crumbs and topped with white wine cream caper sauce and served with drowning potato wedges and mixed vegetables. Roasted Garlic Shrimp, a variation of the classic spicy garlicky hard salsa with garlic bread. Seafood lovers can try the Crispy Crab Cakes with Mango Salsa, salad and salmon fillet served with mango salsa and honey mustard sauce. Available in all Italianni's restaurants located at Greenbelt 3 and Glorietta 4, Makati Ayala by the Center, Greenhills, San Juan, Eastwood, Cebu, Subic by the Bay, Clarkdale, and Festival Alabang, SC, and UP Village and. A new branch opens at SM Mall of Asia this month.

MANILA PAVILION'S Balcarada presents delicacies this. The antique Chinese furniture Hokkien Hall and Melon, Buffalo Mozzarella and Tomatoes in Basil Oil, Seared Tuna Aromatic, Crisp Pork with Crostini, Prawns and Eggplant Bruschetta, Smokehouse Salad with Black Olives, Smoked Salmon and Onion Marmalade, and Roast Goose with Condiments and Dressing. Available until April 25. Monday through Friday, lunch and dinner and Saturday, for dinner only, priced at P800+ per person. Call 8551212 local 3508.

BIGAT offers desserts to average big enough for two people, including Mango Delicacies, the unique combination of the coffee iced and mango. New comes three are the Caramelized Banana Tart, Roast Ice Cream, and the Goldenrod Brownies Mango, among others. An assortment of frozen cakes and gelato are also available like the Nova Succotash Sorbet and the Pistachio Gelato. The health conscious can enjoy the Soup a la Bandolera Mexican and Green Tea Gelato. Call 1373000 ext 1330000.

HOTEL PHILIPPINE PLAZA's Lapu-Lapu on the Manila Bay promises and tomorrow (May 5, Cinco) group of ten partaking of the Grand Lapu-Lapu Seafood Buffet with all you could for a complimentary welcome drink. Ten complimentary cocktail vouchers, three complimentary drinks for the Poolside Barbecue dinner, four persons upgrade vouchers and five coffee coupons for a chance to stay in the Imperial Suite. Call 8551000 local 1300 and mention the Manila Bay promotion when making reservations.

MANILA PAVILION Hotel's newly opened Seasons restaurant features different stations, which are further divided into corners. The hot station has the pizzas, pasta, barbecue, pasta, carving and "mixed to order" station. The cold station offers breads and cheese, salads, Italian antipasto, Chinese and Japanese appetizers, and shellfish corners. Three kinds of soup (Filipino, Chinese and International) are at the soup and chowder station. Dessert, creative cakes, ice cream and buffet-bake, waffle and crepes, and native desserts corners are at the pastry station. Seasons at Manila Pavilion is open 6 a.m.-11 midnight daily. Call 526 2121 local 2161.



Cooking demo at the mall

LEARN EASY, DELICIOUS AND practical recipes for the hottest season of the year.

Join "Bobbi Kalaw" at the mall, a free cooking demonstration, 1-4 p.m., May 7 at the Atrium of SM Baguio. Get cooking tips and learn techniques from chef Wendy Gan of BAKED Grill, with Bobbi Kalaw (left).

Simply bring three empty wrappers of Magnolia Quickmelt, Dari Creme, Hotdogs, Magnolia Chicken, Purefoods Supreme Sliced Ham, Magnolia Fruit Gel and/or Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdogs at the venue. My Court Food Club members are encouraged to attend.

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